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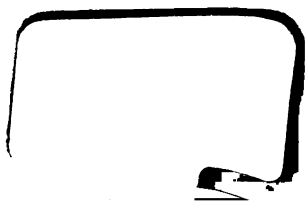


Hubert's

two Anchors

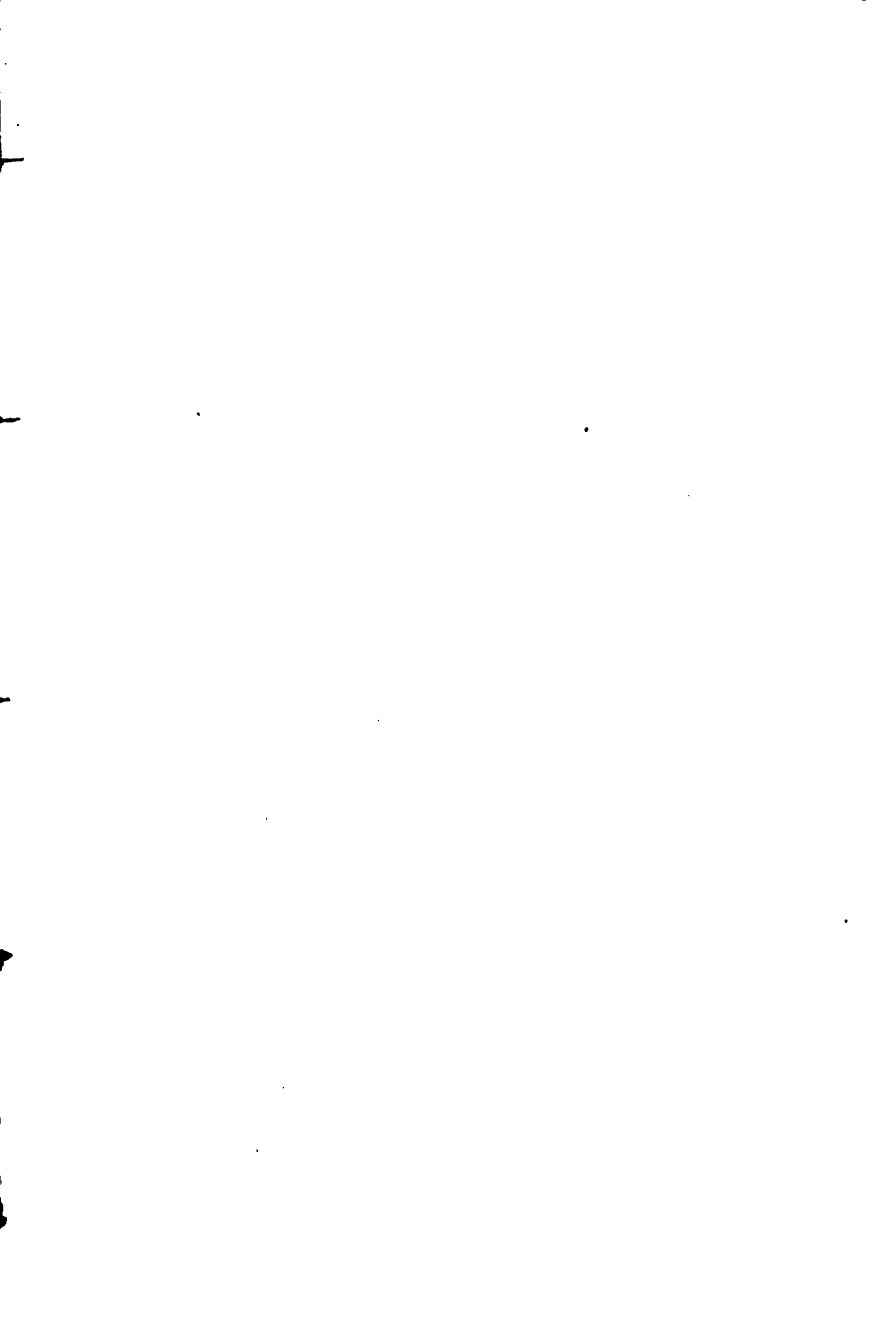
E. A. W.







HUBERT'S TWO ANCHORS.





"The question after all for each is this, Who is my Master and Lord."—PAGE 34.

Frontispiece.

HUBERT'S TWO ANCHORS;

OR,

SERVICE CHOSEN.

BY

E. A. W.

"Let God's pure Word thy line and compass be,
And steadfast faith weigh thou in anchor's stead."

Humphrey Gifford.

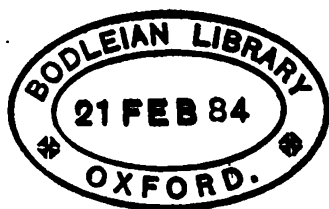
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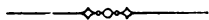


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TWO ANCHORS.



CHAPTER I.

THE CHANGED HOME.

I rose, I journeyed, neared my home ; and soon
I cast my eager eyes abroad, to know
If change had touched the scenes of long ago.

“I CAN’T tell how to do this : this isn’t the right-shaped curve. I do wish he would come and show us !”

“No, Osbert : you shall not trouble him about things like kites now, though I wish we might. I want him to give me some red and black paper to make goblins of : he has some somewhere I know.”

“I only wish mine were far enough done to begin upon goblins. Yours is crooked, I hope you know. Go and ask him to come and help us : he won’t mind if *you* do.”

A push added force to the suggestion, but produced no further effect than to send a lump of paste on to the middle of the nearly-covered kite.

“It is no good shoving, ’Bert, for I won’t speak to him about our things now, poor old fellow !”

The affectionate commiseration of the words was repeated in the boy's face, as he looked off his work to the further corner of the large library in which he and his brother were sitting. The object of their desires was standing there in the window; one arm against the glass, and his head down upon it,—a young man, not long past boyhood himself, and looked upon by the boys as their companion of right. His ears were not so deaf as the kite-makers imagined; and presently, when the grumbling began again; the sense of it reached him.

"I don't see why you won't go and ask him. It can't make him more unhappy to help us than to stand moping there like that. How unlucky it was he didn't know it before, then we should all have been miserable at the same time: one can't keep on being sorry always, and he is only just beginning."

"Can't one?" the other boy asked, adding, with another glance at the window, "But for him, I am sure I wish he had known it when we did: it must be horrid for him seeing us beginning to forget when he can't think of anything else. Poor, poor uncle! if one could only think of something to do for him."

"Well, I tell you, I know making kites would amuse him."

Both boys were startled when the words were answered: "Do you think so, 'Bert: shall I come and try?" and their uncle came over to them and sat down, and drew the crooked kite near to look at it. "So you want some goblins for this, Hu., do you?"

"Never mind, uncle;" and its owner pushed it away, "I didn't know you could hear what we were saying."

The other boy was trying to remember what his share of the conversation had been, and did not repeat his desire for help till the loosely-fastened frame had been taken from his hands and silently set firm in a kite-shaped form. "There, 'Bert, you should always make your crossbar sure the first

thing. And now, Hubert, my boy, what was it you were wanting?"

After he asked the question, he seemed to forget it, and let his eyes wander away again to the window. The watching eyes beside him could see from his tell-tale face what dark pictures shaped themselves on the glaring sunlight outside; it would be no unkindness to disturb them.

"I wanted some red and black paper, uncle: I know you used to have some. I am going to make some horrible demons all over the upper side."

"Ah—yes: to be sure, that was it! When did you say your father was coming back, Hu.?" and rubbing his hand over his forehead, he added half to himself, "I can't be at rest till I have seen him: I wish he were here. That paper, my boy: it used to be in my portfolio; but where that is—when I went away I gave it to—oh my—" the rest of his sentence was a groan; and he left the boys and went away to his window, coming back next minute saying, "Hu., come and walk: I can't stay in."

The middle of a sultry August afternoon was no tempting-time to exchange the coolness of the shaded library for exercise in the sunshine outside; but "Yes: I'll come, uncle, if you go," was the ready answer. The forsaken kite-maker grumbled with more reason than before; but he was left to lament alone, and the two went out into the heat and glare.

How far they walked, and where they went, Hubert would have found it hard to tell; but by the time they turned back again into the home park the evening grey was in the hollows and the sunlight just leaving the uplands. How tired they were their lagging steps showed; and when a little descent brought them to the edge of a stream, betrayed by the faint mist rising from it in the warm air, the boy stopped. There was rank grass along the margin, filled with tall weedy flowers, a tempting cool resting place.

"Uncle, I don't know what you are made of, but I

an dead beat. Do stop a bit, and give me a minute to breathe."

It was a pleasant ruddy-brown face that Oswald Raymond took between his hands, and they were bright wide-open eyes that looked up at him to see the change that two days of grieving had worked. His heavy, sunken eyes, and blue lips, with all the colour gone out of them, made him look unlike himself. "You are tired too, uncle, aren't you?"

"Yes: and I am afraid I have done a foolish, selfish thing, Hu., bringing you all this way. Yes: I am tired, now I think of it: this stagnant air takes all life out of one. Here, it is cooler here,—sit down." He let go the head he held and turned away, pacing backwards and forwards beside the stream, while his nephew watched him as each time he lengthened the distance of his beat.

"Uncle, why don't you rest?" he asked at last. "Do lie down a few minutes: you can't tell how jolly and cool the grass feels."

So along the stream where the nut-bushes grew Oswald threw himself down, and nearly an hour passed away before his companion roused himself again to think of him. Then it was to sit up chilled and hungry, to find the moon shining down upon them, throwing a deep shade from the bushes where his uncle still lay at full length, with his hands tightly clenched together and his head buried in the grass. He called to him once or twice, but receiving no answer sat still awhile longer. But the night air was creeping round him, and the lights in the house on the distant slope shone out steadily,—brightest upstairs, where all three windows of the drawing room were bright with ruddy light. "And here am I sitting starving," thought Hubert; "they must have done tea ages ago;—we must go. Oh, how I wish poor uncle weren't so miserable! I never thought he would have been as bad as this. Ten to one it will only make him angry if I go near him now; but I can't stay here any longer."

He moved slowly down the bank, and presently stood by Oswald's side, a choking feeling rising in his throat as he came near and heard deep quivering sobs, interrupted once and again by the despairing moan, "Oh, Adelaide!"

"Dear uncle, wont you come home now? It is nearly nine. I do so wish I knew something to say to comfort you," he added timidly, the tears gathering slowly in his eyes.

"Comfort! what comfort can there be?" and Oswald rose up hastily and hurried to and fro, his hands clasped behind his head, and careless that eyes were watching him, burst out in wild lamenting: "What is life without you, oh, my best, my best! Dear sweet face buried away from me,—how can I bear it: days, years, aye all life without you!"

The tears which had gathered in Hubert's eyes welled slowly over now, dropping down upon his hands; when suddenly brushing them away, and feeling in his jacket pocket, he sprang to his uncle's side: "Here, uncle! She told me to give you this some time when you were alone; I brought it out with me, but keeping on walking so I forgot it." He thrust a small packet into his hand.

With trembling fingers Oswald dragged aside the ribbon tied round it and tore open the seals: within lay a small worn book, a curled lock of hair, and a letter. "This is not her writing," he said in a choked voice.

"It is mine," the boy said: "she was too weak to write herself. She wrote the last piece though: I didn't see that. She wrote a piece now and then,—I wrote the rest by her bed; she dictated it to me one night."

"When she knew herself dying?"

"Yes; the night before she died."

"You must tell me all about that time one day." Oswald spoke quietly now: the contents of that little packet had brought him once more as it were into union with the one from whom he had with terrible suddenness found himself cut off, and it calmed the excitement of his grief. He laid his hand on his nephew's shoulder. "I have treated you

most barbarously, I believe, my poor child," he said. "Hurry home now, there's a good boy."

"You are surely coming too?"

"Yes, presently; but I want to be alone now. You go: you have brought me real comfort in this,—given me what I was hungering after, I shall be in by and by."

It was with some reluctance that Hubert obeyed. Then the precious paper was spread out in the moonlight, and the feebly written disjointed sentences devoured. In the stillness of the lonely park, the words, so full of yearning love and tender comforting, seemed spoken to him rather than read by him; and as he came to the last lines, nearly illegible as they were, he lifted his head as if to catch the last good-bye before she left him alone again. But there was nothing but the swaying branches of the nut-bushes, and no sound but murmuring water, and with swimming eyes he turned to read the precious last lines again. "Oh, my boy, how I long after you! I cannot bear to think how you will grieve: may God comfort you. I can write no more. God bless and guard you till we meet at home; be His faithful servant to your life's end; help my children there; comfort my husband. Your loving sister, Adelaide Raymond. We are in Christ, and so still together."

It was well that those trembling dying fingers had not sooner refused their office, nor kept back the words, so fitting in with their answering thoughts of love and comfort to the dreary feelings of desolate sorrow and despair, which had bowed Oswald down with all the weight of a first grief. As a voice from the dead the letter came to him, telling too of the life of the writer, and his numbed heart beat again with some hopefulness. He knelt beside the nut-bushes and prayed, then pocketing his papers, walked wearily home.

The drawing-room at Raymond Park was a lofty, long room, with panelled walls and painted ceiling. The one lamp burning on the centre table left much of it in darkness,

and beyond the pillars at the western end the moonlight came in through the bow-window, throwing long shadows towards the circle of warmer light in the centre of the room. One of the side windows stood open, the curtains pushed back, and there May Raymond was standing looking out, fanning herself with a large paper kite. It was a rare thing to find her so still, and silence at last provoked the question, "What are you dreaming about there so long, May?"

She was a pleasant looking girl: her eyes were bright like her brothers'; there was a soft colour in her cheeks, and the small head was surrounded by a coronet of thick brown hair. She turned from the window with a little sigh and drew near the table. "I don't know exactly," she said: "there is plenty to dream about. I was thinking most about uncle, I believe. But, Osbert, why are you doing your lessons now?"

"Got to," was the laconic answer.

"I hope Hubert hasn't left his so late," she said, bending down to disentangle the tail of the kite from among the legs of the chairs.

"Just like you, May!" her brother cried, springing up. Why do you go dragging the thing about after you, why can't you leave it alone?"

"You left it on the piano, where I have asked you a hundred times not to leave your things. I do wish you wouldn't come messing up here at all. I never can keep the room tidy."

"Who asked you to?" Osbert said, carrying the kite and restoring it to its former position.

"Don't do that, Osbert; if I weren't to try and keep things straight there would not be room to move at last. I do wish you would take your books off to the library, the room does look so forlorn."

The words were greeted by a laugh, and Osbert sat himself down again.

"We shall both be more comfortable, May," he said, "if you leave me and the room alone,"—and with his head in his hands, he set once more to work.

His sister was silent, and gathering an armful of things from various corners, left the room, carrying the kite with her, which she deposited at last upon Osbert's bed. The boys' room was a long way from the drawing-room, and having no inducement to return there, she took her stand at their high window, and fell to dreaming once more. Her brother had called it dreaming, but her thoughts were fed by realities far more substantial than the fancies which visit dreamland. The same shadow which had fallen across her young uncle's path had darkened hers, and it had never seemed darker than it did to-night. A miserable feeling of loneliness had crept over her, and the failure of the hopes of the day before had made it far greater; she had expected so much from her uncle, of help and cheering, and now he had returned, their loss only just known, in an abandonment of grief which startled her quiet nature,—no helper, but a fresh cause of sorrow. The reaction of feeling was great, and each trifle seemed to add to the depression.

She was at the window still, her eyes wandering over the park with its beautiful slopes and great trees, each standing with its sharply marked shadow beside it, when the door was pushed open, and Hubert walked slowly in, and throwing his hat upon the nearest chair, and himself upon his bed, burst out crying. He had not seen his sister, for that side of the house was in shade.

"What is it Hu.?" she asked, though she well knew. She knelt down by him, and pushed the flattened hair from his forehead, kissing his cheek with her cool lips.

"Oh, May, May: I do so wish mamma had not died!" He turned himself round and threw his arms about her neck. It was the first time they had spoken of the lost mother between themselves, though some months had passed since they had stood beside her grave; but he was

tired out now and shyness was forgotten. How May's heart echoed the cry. "Uncle is so miserable!" he went on, struggling to stop his tears.

"Don't cry about it, dear," his sister said. "I wish you had not gone with him; I dare say we shall all be happier again some day, but it is very bad at first."

"And he loved her so very much, May. I can't bear to see him cry."

"He ought not to have let you: he is old enough, surely, to have command over himself."

May spoke severely, and her brother jumped up, crying indignantly,—

"Don't say that, May. I wish I had not told you."

"Well, never mind, I daresay he can't help it: he is very different from what I am. You've had no tea, poor boy: wash your face and hands and I'll have some in the drawing-room for you by the time you come down."

She went, and Hubert set about doing as she said, feeling all the better for his short burst of tears.

He was busily at work over cold pie and tea when Oswald presently opened the drawing room door and crossed over to the small table over which May was presiding. It had been placed in the further window in the bare space between the pillars. "No: nothing to eat, thank you. Give me a cup of tea." He leaned against one of the pillars and drank it, and came back for another. May had been watching him for some time, repenting her severe speech about him as she took notice of his sad looking eyes and the wearied look of his white face. She was fearing for the carpet, too, as his cup was balanced uneasily upon three fingers, quivering dangerously as each short involuntary sigh shook his arm.

"May, will your father be home in time for him to come in here to-night?" he asked, after a silence of some minutes, during which she was sure his restless eyes had marked every separate object in the room.

"Perhaps so," she said, guessing uncomfortably the cause

of the question. "He may come any time, as he is riding ; he likes that better now than the train."

"And do you think this a place fit for him to come into ? Look at that piano there, the rule is that nothing is to be put upon it, the contents of half a book case and all the toy cupboard seem on it now. Surely, May, you could keep some sort of order about the place."

"Indeed I have tried, uncle."

It seemed hard that all the blame should fall on her, the only one of the three who had ever thought about it, and Hubert said : "I'm sure she does try ; it is children's things mostly, and now 'Bert's books."

"Yes, clear them away," said Oswald : "you know lesson books are not to be brought in here."

"Papa never minds me, and I can take them with me when I go to bed."

"Osbert, if you think because your mother is dead her commands are to be set aside, I don't," Oswald said sharply, setting down his cup ; "and if you think fit to disobey her, it shall not be before me ; so take off those books at once."

The boy's face turned crimson, as much with confusion at hearing the mother's name as with anger ; but he gathered the books under his arm and silently walked off.

"Do you take your brother's part as much as ever, old woman ?" his uncle asked, after a little time of watching the glowing cheeks and glistening eyes bent over May's knitting. "I see you think me harsh, May, but you must forgive me this evening."

She looked up, saying earnestly, "Don't think me siding with Osbert's untidiness, uncle ; but I do not like to hear you call our leaving our things about disobedience to her."

"Dear child," believe me I never thought of you when I spoke," and Oswald drew her to him, adding sadly : "It is not worth making a fuss about after all ; getting this all like old times again would be working no cure to one's misery. Good night, dear May. I shall go up to bed and try and

forget it all a bit ; and you had better be off too, Hu., you look as tired out as I feel."

Hubert went, his sister turning back from following him to kiss her uncle again, and tell him how glad she was he was home again. "It will be such a comfort to feel papa has someone to speak to ; I mean someone grown up."

"May, I have wanted to ask you : tell me how he is?"

"I don't know, uncle ; he is not exactly ill, now, but he—did Hu. tell you how bad he was for some time?—but hark, there he is."

Through the night stillness the quick steady trot of the home-coming horse was not to be mistaken, and May said, "Hadn't you better meet him at once in the hall? it will be less trying for him than having to think of seeing you ; he doesn't know you are here, your letter was not forwarded."

"May, I am ashamed of myself : I don't think I can go down, I have had to think of seeing him." He shivered, and sat pressing his forehead in his hands trying to steady himself.

"Don't see him, then, at all to-night," she said pityingly. "I will go down and tell him how it has all been, and that you are feeling unwell and are gone to bed."

• "It would not be true to say so, my girl : I am quite well, except for this splitting pain across my head. No, I'll see him : once done is not to do. There is his ring."

He hurried to the door, and his niece heard him below dismissing the servant and unfastening the front door. She walked away then along the dim passages to her own room, and shut herself in. As she sat before her glass smoothing out the brown hair from its plaits, her heart was away in the hall where the brothers were together again, after the long two years parting ; what change would the younger see in the face that would have greeted his at the open door, and how would her father bear the sight of the grief-stricken one which would meet his ! Fast the memories of other meetings came back to her ; what happiness there had been

then! the young brother and uncle had been the romance in the quiet life-story of the house, seeming to carry about with him the brightness of the salt air and the waves where he lived his life. She could picture again the first rush up the stairs to find the one to whom the first kiss must be given, and then the young ones dragging him off to the nursery to be half-devoured; she seemed to see and hear it all over again, and recalling the dreadful scene of two days ago, she turned hastily from her glass as the reflection there showed the tears gathering. She dashed them away and knelt to pray; she would not let herself cry, but her heart was very heavy as she echoed Hubert's sigh, "Oh, I wish mamma had not died!" So thinking, the murmured words of prayer were often interrupted by long pauses, and at last sleep overpowered her. The minutes passed by unheeded, and the candle burnt low, while creeping footsteps went by her door and she heard nothing. It was a sudden loud noise which drove sleep from her at length, and she started to her feet and stood listening, wondering whether a second sound would reveal the mystery of the first. But when the night stillness remained unbroken, a nervous fear crept over her, and she wrapped her dressing gown round her and stole away quickly to her brother's door.

"Why you look as frightened as if you had seen a robber under your bed," Hubert said, laughing, rubbing his sleepy eyes as the candle-light dazzled them.

"It does frighten me, Hu., and I'm not ashamed to say so; there are so many empty rooms about now, people might get in."

Hubert thought a moment, then sitting up he said, "Well, I'll come down with you and have a look, if I can see to walk straight." He wrapped himself in an old plaid, and lighting his candle followed his sister to her bedroom. "You stay here, May, and I'll go and see if uncle knows anything about it: I daresay he is not in bed yet."

Two or three knocks failing to obtain an answer, he

turned the handle at last and looked over his candle into the dark room. He was startled to see his uncle sitting on the floor, with his head resting on the seat of a chair; a broken lamp lay near him, and a smell of burnt oil filled the room. "Uncle, is anything the matter?" he asked, stooping over him.

It was a minute or so before he was answered, and then Oswald moved slowly, making a useless attempt to pick up his lamp as he rose. He seemed glad of the help of his nephew's hand, and as he gained his feet sank down again into the big chair that stood near the window. "I have smashed my lamp, Hu.," he said, "and I had not energy enough left to pick it up again, or to find a match to light a candle with." He put back his head as he spoke, adding, "I can't think what is wrong with me, I feel so horribly queer."

He looked so deathly that Hubert went for some water and bathed his face with it, and then waited by him awhile. He spoke to him two or three times, but hardly got an answer, and he presently hastened back to his sister's room.

"May, can you tell me how I can get some wine, or something for uncle? It was he made the noise you heard: he has broken his lamp."

She told him, and from the store-closet he was tempted on to the kitchen, in hopes of finding some embers still hot in the grate, for on the slab outside the drawing-room he had found a prize. His father had gone supperless to bed, for there stood the silver bowl filled for him with rich soup, untouched and cold. With the help of sticks and bellows a flame soon flickered among the blackening coals, and pouring the soup into a saucepan he held it over it, impatiently waiting, a picture fit for a painter; the red flickering shining over his sleepy face and tumbled hair, the faded plaid thrown round his shoulders, the white night-shirt appearing below, above his bare ankles and slippers feet, while the cat raised its back and rubbed against him, as if in gratitude for the renewal of its lost comforts. The rising bubbles

and savoury smell told at last the flame had done its work, and refilling the bowl he retraced his steps upstairs.

He found his uncle as he had left him, only sunk further down in the chair, and seemingly half asleep. He looked up as he came in, saying, "So here comes my ministering angel back again: what have you there?"

"Something which you must drink, or you will be most ungrateful," Hubert said, looking anxiously at him as he put down his tray, and taking the bottle from under his arm proceeded to fill the glass. Oswald lay back in the arm-chair watching the quaint figure through half-closed eyes.

"Where did you learn that costume for a Ganymede, Hu.?"

"My old plaid. Perhaps Ganymede might have been reduced to the same if he had no dressing-gown, and had been called out of bed by Jupiter, or somebody fainting," the boy answered, laughing, as he handed his bowl. "Come, now, if this tastes as good as it smells it is nothing to make such a face about."

"I'll drink the wine, Hu., I can't eat soup."

Hubert looked dissatisfied.

"Do you know, uncle, I believe you fell down because you have been starving yourself till you are too weak to stand up, if it weren't that you fainted outright, which I half believe; you have eaten nothing all day, nor yesterday either, and then gone tramping all those miles in that awful heat."

"Nonsense about fainting, Hubert, I never did such a thing in my life: it was just this splitting pain across my head half blinded me, and when I came into the room and turned to shut the door everything turned round, and I stumbled and the lamp dropped."

"Well, call it what you like, though I always thought that turning round in one's head meant faintness; but do eat this soup: you don't know what a bother I had to get it hot. I am sure it will do you good; you look so dreadful.

Do, dear old uncle!" He held the bowl again to him, and lifted a spoonful of the soup to his white lips.

Oswald drew back his head, saying, "Come, I'm not too far gone to feed myself; give it to me, perhaps I can manage it now, the wine has put some life into me." He took the silver basin and returned it empty. "Yes, Hu., you are a wise doctor: I believe that was what I wanted, fill the glass again."

The boy did so, and then squeezed himself down into a corner of the wide arm-chair, and his uncle put his arm round him and leaned his aching head upon the sleepy one resting against his shoulder. They sat so for some time, till with a tightening pressure of his arm Oswald said suddenly, "At least I have got you left: don't go from me too."

The head on his shoulder gave an answering pressure, and Hubert said,—

"And papa, uncle: now you have him too."

"Yes, he has come home: I shouldn't have known him, though, if I had met him in Japan."

"Not known him! I don't see there is much difference in him, except he says his hair is turning grey, and that one can hardly see, and he is thinner."

"It isn't his face: it was the brother I left that I was longing to find, and I shouldn't have known him for the same. Heartless, absurd! Well, I suppose I was absurd to look for comfort above ground, but one does expect something from one's only brother."

Hubert raised his head.

"Uncle dear, what do you mean? Wasn't he glad to see you?"

"Oh, very! Did you know that the Wood Farm is empty still? He told me that to-night, and several other as interesting facts."

Oswald's tone was bitter; and the boy sat up, saying,—

"But, uncle, perhaps he did not know that you had not got his letter. And you know if you said anything about

what has happened, he cannot bear to speak about it,—he never does.”

“Folly and nonsense! But there, you are his son. I wish you were my brother. Go to bed, my boy: I shall only be saying what I ought not next.”

“I wish often you were my brother. You might just as well be as papa’s: there are only fourteen years between us.”

“Yes: only fourteen. They gave me that bowl there when I was a year old. And I remember now, when you were no bigger than that, sitting beside her with you on my knee, feeding you out of it, and Osbert, lying on her lap, clutching after it. She was so proud of her twin-boys. But I always got hold of my own property.”

Hubert smiled and laid his head down again; the smile soon passing, as a heavy sigh told him how soon the sense of loss followed on the remembrance of the happy past. He was suddenly drawn closer again as Oswald repeated, earnestly, “Yes, Hu., you must never go from me too: I have you left still.”

“Of course you have, uncle; and, indeed, I’ll always try and please you as much as I can, for there is no one in the world I love so much.”

“Hush: you mustn’t say that with your father in the house.” But Hubert knew by his tone that the words had pleased him, notwithstanding his “hush;” and it emboldened him to add, caressing the hand he held, “Well, you know I always did belong to you,—they always said I was yours; so I have the right to say it.”

“Hu., should you like to hear what your mother says of her promise to me about you? Oswald took his letter from his pocket. “She says you were being a great comfort to her. Yes: here are the words. She goes on, after speaking about you,—‘His love for you is very great; cherish it for my sake. The promise about him was a *promise*: it is my dearest wish for him.’ We shall feel we are pleasing her when we go away together some day, shan’t we?”

"Yes. She told me she wished it," Hubert said, low : "and that I was to try to be all I could to you ; for she was afraid you would be so very lonely."

They were silent again then, till Oswald started, saying,—

"There, it is striking one o'clock : go back to bed, my boy."

"Let me help you undress first. I don't think you can help sleeping soundly to-night."

"I think I shall : I am very tired. No : you shall do nothing more for me to-night. I have taxed your fealty largely already : you must call upon me to pay you back some day."

"It won't be long before I do, uncle : to-morrow morning I think I shall. They won't find either of us down till pretty late."

They said good night once again ; and one of them, at least, went to his bed, feeling the happier for their talk.



CHAPTER II.

THE TUTOR.

"Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."

THERE was an early arrival at the house next morning. A thin dark-haired man stood upon the door steps, laden with carpet bag and umbrella; and the housemaid, whisking her duster in the hall, eyed him askance through the open door, and finished her work with redoubled swiftness. He watched her a few moments, and then stepped back into the drive and took a survey of the front of the house. The windows were mostly closed, and the blinds down in the bed-rooms. As he turned back again to the steps, muttering, "High time I was back," the striking of the clock sounded up from the village, telling eight as the hour.

"Are these the ways you fall into, left to yourselves for six days?" he asked, with one foot on the stairs.—"Sleeping away the best hours of the morning. Are the young gentlemen down?"

The girl laughed.

"I should think not, sir. They are too glad of a rest, like the rest of us."

"Rest indeed! In bed at eight o'clock on a summer's morning I call sluggishness. That clock is slow. Let the bell be rung at once, and be ready in the library."

He left no time for remonstrance, but, carpet bag in hand, ascended the stairs. Could all the wishes have been realized which were expressed in the kitchen that morning respecting the new comer, he would have had an uneasy day before him.

"'Tis no wonder them poor young gentlemen call him a dragon," muttered the angry cook, rising from her unfinished breakfast, and rolling down her sleeves. "What is the good of his pealing the bell like that?"

"He'll be waking master and poor Mr. Oswald, as sure as fate," chimed in the footman. "Why can't he leave me to mind my own business?"

"You are not sharp enough for him," said the housemaid, following them upstairs. "That Mr. Maynard will worry the life out of me with his bells and his hurry."

Grumble as they might, however, there was no thought of rebellion; for the dark-faced tutor had undisputedly a fully empowered authority in the house. It was but a small company that gathered in the library for morning prayers; two children creeping in late from the nursery making the only addition to the unwilling audience, summoned from the downstairs' breakfast to listen to the monotonous reading.

"Carry this note to master Osbert, and say that prayers are over: be punctual with breakfast."

The footman took the twisted paper with an unexpressed thanksgiving that it was not for him; and, after much calling and shaking, succeeded in rousing Osbert enough to sit up and take it. Clutching at his curly head with a cry of dismay, the boy, now thoroughly awake, unfolded it and read,—

"I am obliged to return to the station; be ready for me at 9.30. Xenophon, last fifteen lines prepared; grammar, pages 42—44; Euclid, 5 and 6, 2nd book; Rollin, chap. 9. John Maynard."

"Hu.," he shouted to the opposite bed, "he's come back: here's a sell! Hand him over his precious epistle, Foster."

The man, laughing, crossed over to Hubert, saying,—

"You had better both get up at once and go down, for he seems in a desperate hurry this morning."

Hubert read: and flinging the paper on the floor, and himself back on the pillow, "He may hurry as he pleases," he said: "it is more than I am going to do for him."

"Well, sir, you must be braver than I should be," said the man, as he left them.

"Or than I am," said Osbert, springing to the floor. "I thought by his not appearing last night we were safe for another day; and now what a precious poking up to his temper we have given him,—not being down to prayers!"

Hubert lay on his back, with his hands clasped under his head, revolving a plan of escape from his dilemma.

"You must be mad, Hu., to lose your last minutes like this," his brother said, as he went to the door. "Here he has called for the very pieces we are certain to know worst. I know the old wretch keeps notes of every lesson he sets us. Do get up and look over them! You'll get a caning as sure as fate."

"No: it is too hot to slave now; it has been hanging over me for a month. I haven't looked at one of the things he names. But I'll find a way to do for him."

Hubert and his uncle were the last at the breakfast table that morning. Oswald sat with his head in his hands; and Hubert, looking across at him, thought his night's rest had done him but little good, and his short absent answers told of a mind burdened with trouble. His nephew was in a fever of impatience to introduce his own matters; and, after several vain attempts to raise a conversation, he went round and seated himself at his uncle's side, beginning in a hesitating voice,—

"It doesn't seem kind to be bothering you just now about ourselves; but you said last night I might come upon you when I wanted help, and we are in such a fix,—at least I am."

Oswald looked round.

"In a fix? And what can I do for you? Don't be

afraid of troubling me. I know I've been selfish enough, but I'll do now what I can to change; though, truth, its a harder matter to rule oneself than a whole ship's crew. What is wrong with you?"

The story did not take long in telling; and Oswald roused up during the narration and said, "I shall be curious to make acquaintance with this tyrant of yours. But why did he want you to work if your father said you might play?"

"He wouldn't believe about the holiday. I know he just wanted to see how we should stick to it without him."

"You are sure your father meant you to have the week?"

"Yes, quite. And he told us, as he was riding away, not to misuse our freedom; and I am sure we didn't: and we did some of the work just out of fright. I assure you, uncle, it is no fun when Mr. Maynard is angry."

"Go and ask your father then to explain what he did mean."

Hubert laughed. "I might as well ask Minnie as papa. He always stands by Mr. Maynard, and would say at once that we were bound to have obeyed him: he never will hear a word about our lessons. Please just go and ask for a fortnight's holiday for us; we have not had any this summer. Your coming home will be a good excuse."

"True," his uncle said. "Of course we should have had a spree any other time at my coming back. Well, I'll do it for you, Hu., which is more than I would for anyone else this morning." He rose as he spoke. "Where is your father? Does he keep his old bed-room?"

Hubert told him; and jumping through the window, reached the library in three springs, and made his entrance there by the same means. The sunbeams shone in on Osbert's curly head and round shoulders as he sat at the table, toiling on to the last moment. He looked up at his brother as he sprang in, laughing, carelessly pushed a few books together, and snapping his fingers in Osbert's face, said,—

"There, I don't care *that* now for old Draco; only be sharp to keep off questioning as long as you can."

Before more could be said, the tutor came in, and greeted the boys gravely. His grey sunless face was not an inviting-looking one,—dark eyes glancing out sharply under overhanging brows, and deep lines round the mouth, making the compressed lips still harder looking.

No trace of a smile answered Hubert's attempt at a good-humoured "How d'ye do?" or Osbert's exclamation, "We thought you would be away another day, sir."

"On what ground? I said I should be back to-day."

He seated himself in the large leather-covered chair, his accustomed seat, and turned over the books before him, while Osbert sat with both elbows on the table watching him, Hubert making a pretence of looking for a book in the further bookcase, securing a retreat in case of danger through the open window.

"You are ready for me?" came the question at length, and Osbert's reply promptly succeeding: "Oh, yes sir," followed by much chatter, likely as he thought to occupy the tutor's attention and prevent the repetition of the question.

"Silence, Osbert: don't be childish, and don't crouch so. Hubert, I did not hear your answer."

"I gave none, sir," said Hubert, trying to speak boldly, while he listened eagerly to catch the sound of his uncle's coming steps. The dark face he was looking at was not one he liked to face when anger had darkened it still more, and the few moments' silence which followed his words seemed to him like minutes. Osbert glanced round hastily to make sure that the weapon he had hidden was safe out of sight.

"I am waiting for your answer," the tutor said, at length.

"The work isn't done, sir: my uncle wanted me. I have done part, which is more than I need have done."

"And you dare to disobey me to my face, and to bring up your uncle's wanting you against your duty! You have

long needed a lesson to teach you to lower your tone a little, and truly you shall have it now."

He turned to the corner where Osbert's eyes had gone a minute before.

"Please let him off this once," the boy began. But Hubert interrupted him: the footsteps he had been waiting for were at the door, and his uncle came in; his reassuring nod bringing Hubert from the window.

Oswald could not forbear a smile at the scene before him, and he looked with no little curiosity at the man of whom he had just been hearing such high praise. Mr. Maynard had turned round on hearing the door opened, with the discovered cane in his hand, and some muttered expression of annoyance on his lips, and Oswald's first impression inclined him to agree with his nephews rather than with his brother's opinion. Stepping forward and holding out his hand, "I must beg pardon for my interruption of lessons, I suppose," he said, "but I am come on a message from my brother."

Mr. Maynard bowed slightly, and leaving the offered hand untouched, after a hasty glance at the new comer, turned to the window as if waiting for him to leave them.

"My message is for you, Mr. Maynard," Oswald said, dropping into a chair: "my brother wished me to tell you that he wants the boys to have three weeks holiday from to-day. This awful heat will make you thankful for idleness, I should think."

The tutor gave no answer, only twisted the cane in his fingers; and Hubert, as he whispered his thanks to his deliverer, marvelled at his silence and at the trembling of his hands as he bent the cane into a tight hoop. His lips were pressed; a paleness overspread his cheeks as he caught at the curtain as if to steady himself, the cane springing from his hold across the floor. Oswald picked it up as it hit his foot, saying:

"Well, boys, I see you have no objection to my news;

you had better burn this, and begin afresh without it when the three weeks are up. They will be all the better for the rest, won't they, Mr. Maynard? What do you say to it?" he persisted, determined to have an answer; while the boys gathered their books together, Osbert carrying them joyfully to the bookcase.

"Mr. Maynard, you are not well," said Hubert, wondering greatly at his silence and at his look: "shall I get you some water?"

"No: it is over now," the tutor said faintly, "I must speak to your father about this. Leave your books, Osbert, till I have seen him."

"That cannot be," said their uncle decidedly: "my brother is far too unwell to be spoken to."

"Hubert deserves punishment, not reward," was the stern rejoinder.

"We won't call it reward, but a truce. My brother says it was a mistake about their lessons last week: he will not be troubled about it, so pray let it rest. Pray say no more about it," he added, wearily, as the tutor began with another "but." "They will be good boys: I'll answer for them, when they begin again. You look as if a rest would not hurt you, either," he said kindly. "Hu., go and fetch Mr. Maynard a glass of wine."

"Dear no, thank you: I never touch it. There is nothing the matter with me." But while he spoke his lips were trembling, and his thin hands moved nervously among the books left on the table; then catching Oswald's eye, fixed on him with a look of sudden surprised recognition, he was turning hastily away, when a detaining hand was laid on his.

"John Maynard! how are you here?"

The tutor drew his hand away and moved into the window. "Boys, leave us," Oswald said; "but don't go near your father's study, and tell May she is to share your holiday."

When the door was closed upon them, Oswald rose, and

approaching his companion, laid his hand upon his shoulder. "Are you not going to speak to me: mayn't we shake hands, as the old friends we are?"

"No: pray leave me, Mr. Raymond. I never thought you would have recognised me: I did not know you had returned."

"Don't 'Mr. Raymond' me," Oswald said heartily. "You act as if I had vexed you."

"Vexed me! nay, how should you have done that? The sight of you has unnerved me: pray leave me. I thought I had more command over myself."

"I'll go of course, if you don't choose to speak to me; but it seems an odd way to treat an old friend: you were a kind one to me in old days. Did you never get my letters?"

"Yes, yes: but I cannot speak about it now. Forget, pray, that we have ever known each other, or I shall have to leave this house."

Oswald looked at the stooping shrunken figure and grey-streaked hair of the speaker, and remembering how he had last seen him, an upright strong man, let pity soften the anger which his repellant manner had raised, and he said in his usual kindly tone, "I don't understand you, or why you should wish to shun me. I see you have been in trouble by your changed look, and by your being here; but surely trouble need not separate us: I know what it is now."

The tutor looked up at him.

"Poor young fellow: you call that trouble! Well, everything by comparison. Hubert would have called a caning trouble, no doubt. Look here, Oswald:" as he said the name he took the young sailor's hand in both his, while his eyes were dim for a moment. "I know full well what I am losing when I turn away from you: your love was mine once, I know; but I cannot enjoy it and keep even the shadow of peace I have now. You are the one remaining link to my past life, and the very thought of that past is torture to me. I could not live in this house if we were to

be known as old friends. I am entirely unknown about here, except as tutor to Mr. Raymond's sons, and no one troubles themselves about me. Help me, I pray you, by your silence with me and others, to reach the forgetfulness I long for. I have grown content here, and have found a real interest in my work at last: I should be grieved to have to quit a house where I am treated like a gentleman, and with the kindest consideration. Your brother, too, I think, would be sorry to lose me for the boys. You must forget me, and put away your old feeling for me, as I put away your friendship."

He loosed the hand he held as he finished speaking, and the pressure of it before he relinquished it told with what regret it was done. Regret, indeed! no one knew better than himself the warm love he had refused, and as Oswald turned from him he knew it would not be offered again.

But though for the minute hurt and offended, Oswald repented of his momentary feeling as he caught sight of the look on the thin, worn face, as the tutor moved from the window. He followed him, and putting his hand on his arm,—“Mr. Maynard, I am not going to speak about old times any more, though I cannot understand your feeling; but let me assure you that though I will treat you like a stranger, as you wish it while we are in the same house, my feeling will always remain the same for you, and you may count on my friendship if you ever think it worth the having again.”

“Don't misunderstand me,” the tutor said: “it is not that I despise your friendship, but that I dread—”

“No, no: I understand, I must show my friendship in the way to please you; but may I just say that even for trouble such as I don't know, there is comfort to be found in faith and submission.”

His companion looked round at him, an incredulous half smile parting his lips. “Faith in what? and submission: what else can man do but submit?”

"My faith is in the love which has struck, and in the sure reunion hereafter," the young man answered with glistening eyes; "and there is all the difference between the submission to God our Father, with a hearty 'Thy will be done,' than in hopeless despair under the blow, as from a tyrant."

"Happy for you if you know the difference; my faith is that suffering and loss are: I submit, as they are irretrievable and inevitable."

"You spoke very differently when I was a boy!"

"I was happy and prosperous, and submission is no hard lesson to such; faith in a bright future gives a pleasant horizon to a sunlit foreground."

Oswald answered quickly, "I am more thankful for it with a clouded one."

"It is a happy thing for you that you have it, Oswald: I remember you were always a bright-tempered boy, taking things lightly. Thank you greatly for your promise: few would have taken an offence so kindly. I must go now. Kindly caution your nephews: they heard you speak to me." So saying he crossed the room, and Oswald heard him with slow steps ascending the stairs to his bedroom, where the key was turned for the rest of the day.

Left alone Oswald paced the library floor. "Bright tempered, taking things lightly," he muttered to himself: "well I suppose it is rather a rare thing that a man should be breaking his heart after his sister-in-law. What can his so much worse trouble be, I wonder?" He flung himself down on the sofa, and lay there in the hot air; the glowing sunlight not yet off the windows, the rich scent from the flower-beds filling the room.

Hubert had gone straight to his father's study. "Uncle may say what he likes," he said to himself, "but he is not going to keep me out of this."

Dark eyes were opened as he crossed the room, and followed him with loving looks, and the boy knelt beside the couch where his father lay.

"I was afraid this would be the way," he said : "what can I do for you?"

The usual round of time-honoured remedies were tried, and then Hubert seated himself beside his father, waiting for what time might do. It was a handsome face he watched as he sat there. The soft silken moustache curled above a well-formed mouth, and rich coloured fair hair turned back in waving lines from a straight forehead. Hubert had spoken of the hair as turning grey, but it was only above the temples the colour was changed, since nervous headaches had brought hours and days of pain. Still Mr. Raymond at forty-five spoke of himself as old and grey-headed, making Hubert indignant, and threaten hair dye; while his father cherished his grey locks as outward signs of the grief which had come to him, and would no sooner have parted with them than with the band on his hat.

Presently there was a whispered, "You are better, aren't you, now, papa?" and Mr. Raymond, with his face more at rest, opened his eyes, answering, "Yes, my son. That coffee was a happy thought: we must remember it against next time. I wonder if I shall be up to going down to Cox after all."

"Papa, you would kill yourself!"

"Yes, I am afraid I must not attempt it; but I know there was something to be settled at once."

"Let me send him a message to come up and speak to you."

"No, no: he would kill me as surely with his talking. I must try to make your uncle understand: where is he? I drove him away some time ago: he pitches his voice as if he were on shipboard."

Hubert exclaimed indignantly, "Papa, I am sure uncle never shouts."

"There, there: don't you copy him," Mr. Raymond said. "But I must try and explain this business to him. Has he been ill? I thought him looking very unwell last night."

Hubert hesitated a minute. "You know, papa, he has only been home two days: he knew nothing when he came; he never got your letter, and the second mail came in after they had sailed for home."

"Ah," exclaimed Mr. Raymond, pressing his hand over his eyes; then, after a pause, "What a fortunate thing I happened to be away just at that particular time: poor boy, poor boy! What was it I said I wanted to see him for? this pain drives my memory from me when it comes on like this."

"You didn't say what it was," said Hubert. "Was it about the doing up of the Wood Farm: that was it, wasn't it?"

"Yes, to be sure, that was it; and about thinning of the trees in the woods above it."

"Yes, yes papa," Hubert interrupted: "you know you settled all about that with Mr. Cox when I was with you the other day. I'll go down to him this afternoon with uncle, and tell him you wish it begun at once, and uncle can settle about the farm for you."

"Very well, be it so," and Mr. Raymond shut his eyes again, adding, "It is some good having a son like you, my Hubert."

"All right then, papa: I'll be off and send a message down to Mr. Cox to meet us there; and do you try to have a nap, that will do you most good." He laid his head down beside his father's a moment, and Mr. Raymond pressed his hand upon the thick hair, whispering love and blessing as a fond mother might have done, calling him his best treasure and the greatest joy left him.

Hubert was not surprised to find his uncle fast asleep when he returned to the library. His face had lost its haggard look of misery in forgetfulness, and the boy trod lightly as he went in and out about his note to the bailiff, fearing to rouse him again to recollection. But the deep regular breathing went on, and Hubert drew up an armchair and made himself comfortable with a book, beginning to

realize the strange pleasure of reading a story at that hour in the library. The house was very still in the heat, and a long time passed before he was disturbed.

"What book are you laughing over, Hu.?"

Hubert's smile broadened as he looked up, saying,—

"Oh, you are awake at last. It is only 'Le Conscrit.' Poor Joseph gets into such wretched plights. Have you read it?"

"No: I don't see many new books. But are you up to reading French for amusement?" Oswald asked, taking the book from him.

"Oh, it is quite easy. Mr. Maynard teaches us half in French; so we are quite accustomed to it now. I think he knows it as well as English."

As he was speaking, his uncle's eyes watched him earnestly.

"Do you know you are growing the very image of your mother, Hu.?" he said.

The boy coloured, saying, "Papa said so once; and I often think he gives me more kisses than the others because of it."

"In everything but your eyes; those are like his: hers were grey. I never noticed it before so much. It is the way your head is set on your shoulders, and the shape of your chin,—and everything."

His earnest look made the boy move uneasily under it, and to change the subject.

"Papa's head has been so dreadfully bad," he said.

Oswald turned his eyes elsewhere, answering,—

"Why, I told you not to go near him."

"Oh, I always stay with him when his head is bad," was the composed answer. "It is better now; and I hope, if he can get to sleep, he will be able to eat some lunch."

"Does he often suffer like this? He looked ghastly when I went to him: he seemed not able to bear me to speak to him."

"If anything puts him out, or worries him, you know,—reminds him of things. I knew he would be ill this morning after seeing you : poor old daddy ! He wants you to see about the Wood Farm business for him, uncle, and settle with Mr. Cox this afternoon what wants doing : it is tumbling to pieces. I've sent to tell him to meet us there at half-past three. You'll come, won't you ?"

Oswald looked across at the boy as he lounged in the deep chair, his slim figure bent across, and one leg over the arm.

"Hu., how old are you ?"

"Some way past twelve, uncle. Don't you remember ?"

"You are tall enough for fifteen : your height makes one forget your age."

"Yes, I am going to copy you : that is what 'Bert envies me for. But, oh uncle, do tell me, how did you know the dragon's name ?"

"Don't speak of your tutor like that, Hubert," Oswald said, impatiently. "What made you invent such an absurd nickname for a man like him ?"

"It was Godfrey did it," said Hubert, laughing. "He heard us call him Draco, because he is such a tyrant, and he tried to copy us by calling him Dragon."

"Well, don't do it any more : it is foolish and ungentlemanly ; insulting too, to a good and wise man."

"Good and wise !" repeated Hubert, with a scornful laugh, angered at the tone of command. "I wonder who was so deluded as to call him so last ?"

"I have just said he is so,—good and wise. I knew him before you were born, and loved him heartily. Till I went to sea he was the one, I think, out of my own home I loved best. He was a most true friend to me."

"Well, you must have had uncommonly odd taste to like a stupid grumpy fellow like that, whose one delight seems to be in dinning lessons into our heads, and looks sour over it all the time he is about it."

"Hubert, I said he was my friend, and that I loved him."

Oswald's tone was such as to make the boy quickly apologize.

"Really, uncle, it is hard to believe that you could have loved him: I must say I wish you hadn't."

"That you might still have the power of railing at him, eh, Hu.? Mind you, I don't want you to love him because I did. I daresay you find him a stern hard man, but I will not have him spoken of rudely. Poor fellow: I fear he has gone through deep sorrow of some kind! Ah, if you had known him when I did,—tender hearted and gentle, and certainly most wise and good! I can see him now with those two pretty children!"

"Uncle, was he married? I never knew he had children. Where are they?"

"No: they were his brother and sister,—little Kenneth and Lilian. I suppose they are in their graves; for I fear no blow could have hit so hard but through them. All that property gone too! But I ought not to be saying this to you. He was in great distress at seeing me again, and asked me never to refer to my knowledge of him. I wish he weren't here. It seems horrible to be shut out from even offering him sympathy. Poor old John: the trouble must have been heavy indeed which could have changed him so!"

"Then was he a rich man ever?" Hubert asked, wondering.

"He was a far richer man than you or I are ever likely to be. His place in Cumberland was my ideal of a small property. Now don't you repeat what I have said to Osbert; only I wanted you to know so much, and that he is greatly to be pitied. It must be frightfully galling to a man to change to this after being as I knew him. You will try and behave considerately to him, won't you?"

"Yes," Hubert answered, doubtfully. "But he does go on at me so: it is next to impossible to keep one's temper with him; and I won't stand being lorded over by him."

He spoke angrily, and Oswald lay and watched him, saying nothing. At last the boy looked round with a smile, saying, "You think me too bad to scold, uncle?"

"No, Hu.," he answered: "I was thinking of one day long ago, when you were a little fellow and declared just the same to me, when I held your hands for hitting out at me in a passion. You gave in at last though,—when you had cried yourself tired. Do you remember?"

"Yes: that was to you. You had the right to order me about, and to thrash me too, if you liked, whatever I said."

Hubert remembered that day well, and what had followed when the tears were dried. It was a Sunday evening in winter, and they had sat there in that very room, he on his uncle's knee, with his little head on his broad shoulder. It was six years since then; but it seemed to him as if he could still feel the smooth soft cloth against his cheek, and the comfortable resting-place he had found within his uncle's arms, and the warmth and dance of the firelight. Quiet talk had gone on between the two, part of which the child had never forgotten.

"It is the same question still: isn't it, Hu.?"

Hubert looked up, a serious thought shown in his face.

"What question, uncle? I remember your teaching me all about viceroys, and lieutenants, and deputies; and how angry I was because you called yourself papa's lieutenant. I said you were my captain, and could command me as you liked; and you had to agree too."

"Yes, perhaps I did, as you were pretty well right; for I did not give my commands from your father, but independently, as you were my charge; still my authority was given by him. Anyhow your dislike remained to being commanded by either lieutenant or captain."

"Yes," said Hubert: "I think I have always disliked being obliged to do things; and yet I don't mind doing what you tell me,—generally, at least,—even though I don't like the things. But then I love you."

"Yes : commands and obedience go on very smoothly in a case like ours, now that you are no longer a little unreasonable urchin of six ; but consenting to yield obedience to one or another as you choose, still leaves the great question unsettled. Don't you remember what I asked you that night ? I do : for I had a hard fight about it myself not long before, in the matter of our captious captain, Captain Jackson, whom I felt as little inclined to obey heartily as you do Mr. Maynard. The question after all for each is, Who is my Master and Lord ?"

"My master and lord shall not be old Dra—, Mr. Maynard I mean," said Hubert, fiercely, with an impatient twist in his chair. "Did you end by deciding that Captain Jackson should be yours ?"

"I went higher,—to the One who had given him the right to command me. Your mother set me right on that subject, as on every other, I think ; and I have been happier in consequence ever since. When I was a boy, it was no such easy matter for me,—always at home, with a brother, instead of a father, over me ; and many are the struggles I have had with myself before she showed me what gives the nobleness to every act of obedience to true authority, of whatever kind. I told you that evening : do you remember ?"

"Yes," said Hubert : "it was that made you talk about the lieutenants and viceroys. You said rebelling against them would be treason to—to the One who had set them over anybody."

The words came out slowly ; the unwilling answer only spoken because old habit made it natural to give an expected reply.

"Yes," Oswald said. "And I know that every act of obedience to one set over me is obedience to my Lord, who set him there, and service to the Master who showed us once how to be a servant. When I think of that, Hu., I could be content with the meanest service, did I only feel

it was required from me by one whom He had appointed to command me."

Remembrance of many a home scene in past days witnessed to Hubert the truth of his uncle's words; but he made no answer, and lay back in the chair, staring out of the window, little pleased with the conclusion he foresaw was coming relative to himself. Oswald, watching him, was too tender to draw it; he only said,—

"It seems strange when I look at your long arms now, old man, to remember how they felt round my neck in their Sunday velvet that evening, as you knelt up to whisper to me, 'I do want to be His servant too: I will try and obey Him.'"

Hubert, colouring, muttered something about "*that* and obeying a cross tutor being very different things;" but Oswald went on as though not hearing.

"Having repeatedly to come like this and make acquaintance with you all after long intervals, in which you all grow out of knowledge, is quite puzzling. This time you have all changed your places, and I have got to learn you all afresh. When Maxwell and Maude come home, I suppose I shall find the same with them."

Hubert laughed as he stood up, saying,—

"I can't see that we change, except that we grow, and there is no helping that; anyway those two can hardly be doing that much more." Then seeing the sad wistful look of the day before coming again on his uncle's face, he added, putting his hand on his, "Well, whatever other changings you find, I know there is always one thing that stays the same."

"What is that?" asked Oswald with a smile, in expectation of the answer.

"Only the lots I love you," Hubert said, with a hearty kiss.

"Don't I wish your tutor were by to hear your English," cried his uncle, laughing, drawing himself up.

"If he were, he would call me a Goth for my English, and a baby for something else. He hates to see me kiss papa, so I tell him I'll leave off when I'm fourteen, and have got my uniform, and that shuts him up, for he can't stand the notion of my going to sea: he says it is a profession for fools possessed of animal courage. Now I must go and tidy for dinner: the first bell has rung. Will you call him wise again now?"

And, with a merry laugh of triumph at his sailor uncle, he ran from the room.



CHAPTER III.

THE WOOD FARM.

“The guerdon then,—O hour most sweet,
When I shall kneel for my reward
Before the face, beside the feet,
Of Christ, my Lord !”—*Stone.*

JUST outside the park palings stood the Wood Farm, a large old-fashioned farm-house, half hidden among its wild overgrowth of trees. It was a pretty place, and was looking its best on that summer afternoon as Oswald and his nephew turned the corner of the wood and stood on the strip of meadow-land before the house. He had called it weakness and folly, but it had cost him no little struggle to make up his mind to do what his brother had wished ; and now he could have turned gladly and run from the place. He was tired out with sorrowing ; and the Wood Farm was a very storehouse, whence memory could bring him enough to rouse every feeling of bitter grieving. He called it rebellion against the will of God ; but, as he stood among the long grass, looking upon the still scene, no determination to bear his grief with patience could check the despairing clenching of his hands and groaning sigh.

Hubert, looking up at him, turned away, and went in search of the bailiff, whom he found measuring the length of broken paling round the orchard with his walking stick.

"Well, master Hubert, you must feel quite yourself again, now you have got your uncle back," he said, as they passed round to the front of the house together. "I hope Mr. Oswald is well."

Before the question could be answered Oswald joined them, and shaking the bailiff's hand heartily answered it for himself. Mr. Cox was a small nervous looking man, much oppressed by the sense of his responsibility and the unbounded trust reposed in him. He welcomed his new adviser gladly, beginning at once upon his present anxieties, and then breaking off short with, "but there, I didn't mean to begin talking of myself now." Oswald dreading far more that he should begin talking of him, foreseeing the condolence that was coming, plunged at once into business, and soon had him well into plaster, bricks, and whitewash, as they passed through court-yard, out-buildings and garden, on into the house, where they came to a stand at last in the big kitchen.

"There is nothing short of new plastering for this," said Mr. Cox, looking round with an air of discontent. "I never saw such a state to leave a place in!"

"How horrible it smells!" was Hubert's comment, throwing open a window, while Oswald walked to another, thinking he was answering the bailiff's remark by saying,—

"Yes: I should think whitewash would do."

"Whitewash, Mr. Oswald! Why, where are your eyes? Here are positive holes."

His eyes were not on the walls, but fixed on the sunny park-lands, which, from that side, stretched away in their long slopes in an uninterrupted view. He had looked over it hundreds of times, sitting in his place by that window on Sunday evenings, the room filled with village people, listening with them to his sister's voice reading, and to the thoughtful explanation of the chapter read.

One sentence which Hubert had written in his mother's paper of last wishes for his uncle had been, "Keep on the

Sunday readings when you are at home ; Mr. Prescott wishes it. He tells me they have done good. Young Bennet, who died two weeks ago, said to me, that he was dying at peace with God through what he had learned at the Wood Farm." It was of that request Oswald was thinking now with shrinking, quite heedless of Mr. Cox's remarks on the respective merits of the different village plasterers, when a drooping quiet-looking woman passed the window, and, catching sight of him, curtsied with a glad smile, and hurrying round the house, came into the room.

"Well, Mary," Oswald said, as she caught hold of his outstretched hand, and stood looking up at him, her face a mixture of smiles and tears, "so you are glad to see me safe home again. Are you well, and the children? It is hot work for you weeding such a day as this. I shall be down to see you soon ; but we are busy to-day."

"So I see, sir," she said. "May I clean the room as usual? Oh, I am glad to see you in here ! The whole village will be here when I tell them. It was what I was praying for ; but I feared maybe you wouldn't begin for a week or so just on coming home."

"Are you speaking of the readings, Mary?" he asked, with a troubled voice. "We are not here about that : the farm is going to be done up."

The woman dropped back with a look of disappointment.

"Oh, I am sorry !" she said.

Oswald looked at her a minute, doubting about pledging himself, then said,—

"But I intend beginning in a week or two, if the new owner likes it ; if he objects, we must try and get some other room."

"Mr. Blount says he should be glad for it to be held here still," the bailiff said. "I asked him, for I knew you would wish it. Shall I have it ready for next Sunday? I can if you wish : the plasterers can't be in till next week."

"No, no: I can't," the young man answered, moving up and down the room. "Let me wait awhile. Why, there is nothing to sit down on even!"

"Oh, I can settle all that, if you wished it," said Mr. Cox. "The farm was empty two months before the meetings were given up."

"Yes, that it was," said the woman. "Oh, do, sir, please, come next Sunday!"

"Mrs. Bennet, it's a shame of you plaguing uncle about it when he is only just home," cried Hubert, watching Oswald's face. "Why, he can't even have thought of a sermon for you."

"It's no sermon we want, master Hubert, he knows," the woman said, earnestly. "And I would be the last to trouble him; only my boy Fred.—you remember him, Mr. Oswald—has just 'listed, and he is home with me for one more Sunday." She began crying as she spoke. "He would come here with me, I know. My Harry died happy from what dear madam taught him."

"Well, let Fred. go to church then," said Hubert, as Oswald turned down the room again, rubbing his chin.

"You don't understand, master Hubert. He always does go to church; but he'd listen to every word Mr. Oswald said to us, and he often sleeps half through the sermon. The parson is old too, while your uncle is not much older than my boy."

"I don't think I can do it, Mary," Oswald said. "I'll come and see him before he leaves."

The woman shook her head sadly, but only said,—

"I can quite think, Mr. Oswald, how bad it is for you to think of doing it now. Good day, sir, and God bless and comfort you."

He put out his hand to her again without speaking, and then turned back to the window. The bailiff's question, "Now then, shall we go on to the trees?" roused him.

"Hubert, you go on with Cox," he said, "and meet me

presently. I shall be down somewhere about near the stream."

Mr. Cox expostulated at being forsaken ; but Oswald was out of the door, and his words were changed to a murmur of discontent at being left with only a boy companion.

More than an hour later the two might still have been seen plodding their tiring way through the tangled brushwood and undergrowth. Hubert found it pleasant work going among the great trees, in the shade of their summer wealth of leaves, over the soft leaf mould and the cracking twigs and moss ; and his companion found his merry talk enlivening, if he thought his suggestions contemptible. So the time went quickly by, till, at the foot of an old lightning-blasted elm, Hubert threw himself down.

"Oh, spare this one, Mr. Cox ! I know you are longing to mark him ; and I am sure papa wouldn't wish it, it is such a jolly old tree."

"I wish Mr. Raymond would come and see about it himself," said the bailiff, impatiently ; "or that your uncle had not been in such a hurry to leave us. That old thing will soon be as dead as the log you are sitting on."

Hubert laughed.

"I wonder where uncle is. I must go and find him now. Perhaps papa will come himself next time. It is a good thing you are here to be worried about it all, Mr. Cox : it would kill papa to think about it. I don't believe he remembers he possesses such a place, except when you are with him."

"Well, well : I don't understand people going through the world like that. And though I say it that shouldn't, it is a very good thing for you all that there is someone to take a greater interest in things than your father does."

Hubert stood up, looking thoughtful.

"Yes, I suppose there is a lot to think about ; but papa can't bear being worried about things."

"I daresay not : people often can't bear what they have

put upon them. But a man's property is given him by God to make the most of: he is bound to work it, and to have a good account to give of it,—at least so I think."

"Well, I must go now. I daresay uncle will come next time," said Hubert, shaking hands with his companion. "But he is so dreadfully tired and unhappy to-day."

"Yes, yes: poor young gentleman! Don't say I grumbled about his not coming: of course I can do it myself. He'll be round brisk enough in a little; he was never one for shirking work of any kind. But the place must be looked to in many things that I cannot undertake on my own authority."

"Yes: but please don't trouble him about anything just yet. I do so want him to begin to look jolly again, as he used: it makes me ready to cry to look at his face. And then there is poor papa too."

"Poor lad!" said the little man, laying his hand on the boy's arm. "Don't think I'll add to the trouble of any of you. I pray for you all, night and morning; for it is none but God Himself who can make up to you for what you have lost. Don't heed my grumbling. I'll work for *her* husband and children till my dying day, and only care if I hear said to me at last, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

There was something in the words and humble tone, which touched Hubert: he looked up at him with solemn brown eyes, answering gravely,—

"I am quite sure *you* will hear that, Mr. Cox."

And saying good-bye again, turned and went quietly down through the wood.

As he lay at lazy length among the sweet-smelling fern, Oswald's ears had been attentive to the talk going on in the wood above him; and as the boy drew near to his resting-place, he startled him from his fit of thoughtfulness by lifting his head and saying, suddenly,—

"Hu., should you mind going back a few steps and telling Cox I will come on Sunday evening?"

Hubert shook his head.

"No: that I won't!" he said, coming on. "You know you hate the very thought of it."

"Then I must go myself. You had better be kind, and save my tired legs that hill."

"You should be kind to yourself for once, uncle, and not go and do the very thing you hate," said Hubert, sitting down among the ferns beside him.

"That is using strong words for reading and explaining a chapter, Hu. No: it was foolish to feel about it as I did,—putting a touch of pain to weigh against what may bring pleasure or good to others."

A dissenting growl rose from the bracken.

"Now are you going?" And with some more murmuring against his errand, Hubert went.

"He says the room shall be ready," he announced, as he came back. "I had a great mind to give your message to the nearest tree instead."

"Thank you, Hu. You will know some day the greater comfort of hurting yourself in one way, than risking the having to bear a worse sort of pain."

"I know I won't come with you," said the boy, hotly. "If you choose to hurt yourself, I won't stand seeing you do it."

"Then you'll have to stay at home. Now, that is quite enough about it: it is nothing so very dreadful after all. By the way, what time does your father dine? I must not be late."

They were soon on their way home: going round by the village to take the more level way. As they neared the turnstile at the end of the lane they were following, they were met by the sounds of boisterous laughter and rough jokes, plentifully interspersed with evil as well as fun. A group of dirty, uncombed, village lads was surrounding the turnstile, upon which Hubert saw next moment that Osbert was enthroned, keeping his seat with difficulty in the midst of the pulls and pushes of his rough companions. Darting

in among the throng, Hubert seized his brother's arm with one hand, and the shoulder of the nearest boy with another.

"What are you after, 'Bert? Get down and come away do! Get off with you, Ben!"

As he spoke, there was a sudden cry of "Here comes the Captain!" and the next minute the group had slunk away, and vanished towards the village. Oswald had been "Captain" there ever since he had donned the blue uniform.

"And what business have you coming aping master over me?" angrily questioned Osbert, looking daggers at his brother, who turned from him, saying,—

"It beats me to think how you can bear playing with those rascally sort of boys; besides papa having said dozens of times that you weren't to."

"Come along boys. What are you after, Osbert?" their uncle asked, coming up to them. "What was the row about? Now quick for a race home."

And he was off at a run.

With a feeling of half-compunction for the wound he had given his brother's pride, Hubert turned to him, saying,—

"Come along, 'Bert. I could not help driving those scamps away: you needn't be cross. Come and run home with me. Tea must be ready, and we shall catch it from Miss Sturt."

"I'd as soon run home with a toad," was the gracious answer; and Osbert dropped from his seat, leaving his brother staring after him as he followed his companions. Hubert turned on his heel then, with a "Well, I never!" and took his way leisurely home. He was not well pleased to hear his father saying, as he came into the lighted hall,—

"Lay a place for master Hubert: he will dine with us."

"Oh, please not, papa. I am so thirsty: I'd much rather have my tea."

"And won't claret and water tempt you to bestow your company upon us, you ungracious young man?"

The sound of the clinking cups and merry voices from the

school-room above offered far greater temptation than the prospect of an hour of good behaviour in the dining-room.

"We have been having tea downstairs while you have been away; and Miss Sturt was going to make us some German cakes the first night we went upstairs. I really don't want meat."

"Well, Foster shall fetch your tea and cakes down here then: I want you. Mr. Maynard has sent to say he is not feeling well, and shall not come down; and this morning has tired me out. I am not up to talking to your uncle all alone through dinner."

Then Hubert knew he was wanted to prevent a tête-à-tête, and said no more; though by no means considering himself the object of envy Osbert thought him, as, coming in still later, he met the three crossing the hall. Any feelings of vexation on his own account, however, were soon changed into pity for his uncle.

Oswald had followed his brother absently into the room, and turned naturally to his accustomed seat at the side of the table, when the footman's "Here, sir" roused him to see that his place was no longer the same, and that the man was drawing out the chair in front of the tureen. His sun-burnt cheeks flushed for a moment, then he turned hastily and seated himself with his elbow on the table and his head in his hand, overcome with sudden distress.

"Are you going to give us any soup, Oswald?"

Mr. Raymond's tone was sharp, and Hubert looked from one to the other, wondering what he could do; but the footman was quicker, and already had the ladle in his hand. Oswald, rising, left the room. They could hear his steps pacing the hall for some minutes, and then he came in again, upright and rigid, and seated himself in silence. His brother already had Hubert far in the history of their doings at the Wood Farm; and the boy was well satisfied that his tea and German cakes were better partaken of in the dining-room that night than upstairs. He had felt

some curiosity to see the brothers together after his uncle's words of the night before ; and his astonishment was not small as, instead of the fond fatherly tone on the one hand, and affectionate frankness on the other, to which he had been accustomed, the two now sat at their opposite ends of the long table, interchanging question and answer at intervals as strangers might have done. He, in his childishness, could little understand the selfish sensitiveness that would not admit a sharer in a special personal grief, and hugged a sorrow as a private possession. And the younger brother found it hard to forget the painful rebuffs he had received, and felt little inclined to second the attempts his nephew made at conversation. It was not till towards the end of the meal that he roused himself, began inquiries after old friends ; and once fairly interested, talked so fast that Hubert, joining in with good will, found the last quarter the most entertaining of the hour.

As soon as the wine was put down, Mr. Raymond rose, saying languidly,—

“You must finish your chat alone this evening, you two boys : your spirits are rather too strong for my tired head just now.”

He left the room, and Hubert looked across with a face of dismay at his uncle.

“I didn't think we were making a row.”

“Of course not. But I am to learn that I am not expected to share his rights.” He tossed off the remains of wine in his glass and stood up too. “As my spirits are so good, I may as well go and put some into my long-delayed letters.”

Hubert could not understand his elders, so said nothing. As little could he understand their disregard of the fruit dishes ; but for that he did his best to make amends.

CHAPTER IV.

SERVICE CHOSEN.

“If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?”

“Many a sorrow, many a labour,
Many a tear.”

THE number of schemes proposed during the next few days for the most enjoyable spending of the sunny holiday would have been hard to reckon; but nothing was fixed upon for lack of a leader.

“If only uncle Oswald would come and settle something for us,” was the cry from each child. But when they urged upon Hubert to go and prevail upon him to join them, he stoutly refused.

“What is the good of being a favourite if you can’t ask a favour?” was Osbert’s argument.

But Hubert only grew angry at the appellation, and repeated his refusal.

Sunday came to stop both discussion and wrangling for a time, their thoughts turned into a new channel by the news told them by their brother, that uncle was going to have the readings at the farm again, and was going to begin that very evening.

“Then I shall go,” said both Osbert and May; and Hubert, in spite of his declaration, was in no wise inclined to be left behind.

The farm kitchen was full to overflowing when the three children reached the door; and it was only by some rearranging of chairs and stools that space could be made for them behind their uncle's seat. They were beginning to wonder at his absence, when his voice was heard outside; and Hubert, through the open window near their corner, could hear him speaking to the clergyman.

"You should not have taken this trouble: and now you are here, you must take the reading."

"Nothing of the sort," was the answer: "I value your work far too much. I only came to give you God speed in it. He will not forget the forgetfulness of self which let you come here to-night."

"No, no," Oswald answered, hastily. "The best quieting of pain, if anyone did but know it, is just putting one's neck under His yoke, and working for Him in any way one can: the pressure of it makes suffering duller,—at least for the time."

"And there is not much wonder in that, is there, when you think how close it brings you to Him, who is your yoke-fellow? Is not His promise to those who take His yoke upon them, 'I will give you rest'?"

"True: and in such a union no wonder if not much of the weight is left for our necks," Oswald's voice made answer. "But come, we are keeping them waiting: it is just half-past!"

"I'll give out the first hymn for you, and then go," the clergyman said. "You go in first, or they will think I am come in your place."

The next minute the tall figure filled the doorway, and then the elderly bowed form of the clergyman. They knelt together for a few moments by the little table, where the bailiff had taken care to lay his own large Bible. Hubert, looking at them, remembered the different companion his uncle had had there the Sunday before he left for sea, and wondered if the same remembrance came

to him. If it did, his quiet face showed nothing as he rose to his feet, and joined with steady voice in the hymn which followed the clergyman's short prayer for a blessing on their gathering.

Meanwhile the boy's thoughts were busy with the scraps of talk he had overheard outside the window; and when the reading of the chapter was ended, he would have found it hard to have told the subject of it. The words had puzzled him. What could his uncle mean by taking a yoke upon him? And what comfort could he find in doing it? Had it been to seek a way of comforting, in which he could not help him, that he had been left uncalled all through the Sunday hours; and that solitude in the woods or moor had been a better companion than himself? He looked at as much of Oswald's face as he could see from his corner, listening to his eager words without taking in their sense, and knew from voice, and look, and attitude that his whole heart was in his present work, and that all personal feelings were shut out and forgotten.

"What could he mean," questioned the boy with himself, "about putting his neck under a yoke? And what could there be in this reading and talking, the very thing he had shrunk from with such dislike, to have power to bring about his own wish for him,—to have made him 'look jolly again'?"

In the midst of his ruminating his attention was caught by the words, "A red heifer upon which never came yoke," and he ceased thinking, and gave his mind as well as his ears to listen. His uncle had been explaining the strange law in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers, showing its typical teaching of the work of Christ. As the boy noted the serious look of interest on all the faces before him, he regretted his wandering thoughts; but they had been straying longer than he imagined, and there remained for him to listen to only the last few words.

"You remember that was one point in the description of the victim," his uncle was saying; "and I want just to say

a word before we finish about the reason why it was to be one upon whose neck a yoke had never rested. I asked that question once of the boys of my Sunday class on board ship; an old sailor always sat to learn with them, and he gave me an answer which was a good one, I think, by repeating the verses in the second of Philippians, 'Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. . . . And He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death.' 'Wasn't it to show us that our Saviour had never served, but always ruled, till He came down to die?' he asked me. I think his thought was the right one. Such was the victim,—One on whose neck no yoke had ever rested, He who was equal with God and Lord over all.

"When thirty years of His earthly life had passed, He could then say, 'Take *my* yoke upon you, and learn of *Me*.' So the Apostle says to us, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' He took on Him the form of a servant; He who had reigned for countless ages Master and Lord: He humbled Himself and became obedient. Thinking of that we shall not shrink, shall we, from taking the same place? bowing our necks beneath the yoke with the same submission and lowliness of heart which our Master showed.

"You understand what is meant by the *yoke*? It is always used as a type of servitude; as it is said in books of history, such a nation was compelled to submit to the yoke of the Romans: they had to obey and serve them. We are told to take it upon ourselves. It takes a different shape to each. But our Lord knew what it was to bear every shape and every weight the yoke can take; and to whatever sort of obedience He calls any one of us, we may each hear His voice to ourselves, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me.' We can think of no way of serving

our Master in which that Master has not been before us, bearing, serving, suffering; and all for our sakes, bowing the head which wore the crown that the yoke might be laid upon His neck. Now our time is up. May God grant to each of us to be so cleansed by Him of whom the red heifer teaches, that we, joyfully and obediently bearing His yoke now, may by-and-by share His rest and crown. Let us pray."

Hubert walked home across the park in the moonlight, swinging his uncle's hand in his, thinking of many things more gravely than was his wont; and chiefly the thought ran in his head, whether it might not be safer for his soul's eternal well-being did he renew his old determination whispered long ago in his uncle's ear, "I do want to be His servant: I will try and obey Him." Would the keeping of that determination, and the self-displeasing which must follow, bring that to him which had given back the spring to his uncle's step, spirit to his words, and chased the look of misery from his face?

"Well, Hu.," Oswald said, as if thinking aloud, "when one thinks of what we have been reading to-night, we may well feel that there is something higher and better to be lived for than our own comfort or happiness for our few earthly years. The thought of that Sufferer makes one ashamed of one's faithless grieving. With an eternity with Him in store, why care for what comes now, except as it makes us more fit for His service and presence? 'His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face.'"

There was a glad ring in his voice as he spoke, and the boy looked up to answer; but his brother and sister joined them, and he was silent.

Monday morning found them all in full conclave over a county map.

"Why not settle somewhere to go at once?" said their father, coming into the library. "You may all whistle long for another holiday. Mr. Maynard is looking black at me

for this one, I fancy. The weather will be changing while you are dreaming."

"So I tell them," said his brother: "but they each have a dozen projects of their own."

"Strange it should be so hard to find a dining-room. What do you say to the point yonder?" Mr. Raymond pointed through the window to a gap in the trees, where, far away, hardly visible in the summer haze, stretched a point of land; between it and the top of the trees was a silver line, and that was all of the sea that was visible from their home. "It is somewhat far; but you could start early. All the different wishes would be satisfied there: even Hu. could enjoy some salt water."

"The very thing," said Oswald: "we'll enjoy that together, if you please, Hu. You remember I took you there for a bathe last time I was home." While the children exclaimed, "But how are we to get there?" That point of land with its border line of silver sea had always been to them a distant vision of possible delights too far removed to be attainable.

"Nothing easier in the world," said their uncle. "It is by no means so far off as it seems. I'll take you all there myself, children and Miss Sturt included."

So it was settled; but with the morrow's dawn came the regular patter of the heavy-falling summer rain. It was a great disappointment; and the group of faces round the wet window showed it was so, as Oswald drew in his head again after an inspection of the weather, and pronounced it hopeless. To himself the disappointment was quite as keen as to the children, though from a different cause. Each day as it passed seemed to him more hard to bear than the last, and he had counted more than he had been conscious of on a day devoted to the children, and passed away from the house. A grey chilling atmosphere seemed to him to pervade it all, taking its tone from the gloom upon his brother's face,—a gloom rarely broken; the very smiles, if accident

raised one, partaking of the settled determined melancholy. The tutor's stern gravity too, and wonderful power of silence, added not a little to the mournfulness; and Oswald, with the added weight of his own grief, and the hourly missing of the one who had been to him like sunshine at all times, hated the place, and caught eagerly at any excuse for getting out of it. He shut the window with a sigh.

"Now that isn't good of you, Minnie, looking so cross and miserable," he heard the governess remonstrating behind him, and an ugly whine in answer; and he turned quickly, and catching up the little one, ran off with her to the nursery, whence sounds finding their way downstairs, soon tempted the other children to follow.

The twin brothers, left alone in the breakfast-room with nothing to do, and a whole wet morning on their hands, lounged over their books, increasing their ill-humour by a running fire of cross words across the table, till their uncle, reappearing with books and writing things, silenced them.

"Why didn't you join us upstairs, boys? We have had a capital romp."

He came in laughing, his face flushed with exercise, his hair ruffled out of all pretension to neatness, and his neck-tie untied, looking brighter and happier than either of the sulky boys. Hubert, seeing him, felt ashamed of his own temper, and wished he had done as his little brothers had asked him, and gone to join them in their game. Helping them over their disappointment, he would perhaps, as his uncle had done, have forgotten his own. Again returned to his mind the words heard outside the farm kitchen on the Sunday evening. Had this half-hour, given to the children,—this forgetting of the vexation which his ever-watchful nephew had only too plainly seen,—been a part of the course of the constant putting aside of himself, which seemed Oswald's way of life? Had he done even this little thing to serve God? It was truth indeed when *he* spoke of himself as His servant, the boy thought,

as he seemed again to hear his joyful words of hope, "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face." Alas, that was a hope which to him was no hope!

"What are you staring at me so long for, Hu.?" Oswald asked, with a smile, looking up suddenly from his writing. "Oh, it's my necktie, is it? That is soon put right."

"No: I wasn't thinking of it," Hubert answered. And Oswald noticed, as he looked hurriedly down to his book, that his eyes were filled with tears. The thought had come with sudden bitterness to him, that he knew nothing of the Master who ruled his uncle's life; that in all things, where he had a choice, he ruled his own actions, and was a servant to himself alone: his uncle bent to Another's will; and that yielding brought happiness with it, he well knew.

"I wish you would put away your stupid book and help me here, Hu.," Osbert said, looking up with a worried face from his carpentering.

"What have you there, 'Bert?" Oswald asked.

"Only the ship you made for Hu. I broke one of the masts, and got all the rigging in a mess, and he says I'm to mend it; but I know no more about it than a cat. You have put such a lot of little bits of things."

"I wish you joy of it," said his uncle, laughing. "You remember my instructions, Hu.?"

Hubert would much rather have left the boat alone; but his uncle seemed to take it for granted that he was going to help, so he turned his chair and produced his knife; and for the next half-hour knives, files, and sandpaper were hard at work. No smoother than the latter was the temper of one of the workers. Ashamed of himself that he was cross, blaming the morning disappointment as the cause, in reality unhappy with an unhappiness he hardly understood, his fidgety impatience was hard to control, with no better reason than that of gaining the approval of the only conscience he cared for,—his uncle at the other side of the

table. He succeeded but partially; the quick tap of his foot beneath his chair, the muttered word, or bitten lip, betraying the worried feeling he could not speak aloud.

Presently the whole nursery party reappeared, tired with their morning of play, and wanting something fresh: a new source of irritation and annoyance as they pushed, touched, and questioned. A spar just finished was fingered and broken, and the children were driven angrily away.

"Don't tease your brothers, children," Oswald said, coming to the rescue. "Run into the window, and I'll tell you a story. Get some stools, while I put by my books. Yes, Jack, you shall sit on my knee, only don't fight about it. How are you getting on, boys?" he asked, as he passed the two eldest. "That is fidgety work. You look as hot over it as I used to get, Hu." He touched Hubert's cheek as he spoke; and the boy winced as from unmerited approval, as he looked up and met the look which was always for him in the kind eyes.

The little group settled itself in the window, and the story-telling began; and as one after another the old favourites succeeded each other, the children's laughter chiming in at all the well-remembered jokes, Hubert could have found it in his heart to envy little Jack his place within his uncle's arms, except that the fat bare legs crossed upon the window sill, and the cloth-covered knee beneath his own hand, told him that the place always his in the old days had grown too small for him. The sun shone in from between the parting clouds over the laughing faces turned up to the story-teller; and the boy sat and watched them, the knife ceasing its motion in his hand, the merry stories bringing no answering smile to his grave mouth, as he listened, pondering meanwhile over his own thoughts.

Presently the children began petitioning for "just one true story: something that has happened while you have been away, uncle Oswald." After some demur, on account of the nearness of their dinner hour, "You shall have just

one," he said; "but that must be a short one. What shall it be about,—monkeys or mandarins?"

"Oh, tell us some more about Charley Donne," said Minnie, "the funny-looking little midshipman you told us of last time!" "Yes, do!" cried Godfrey. "I liked about him, when he wouldn't play cards on Sunday when the other boys plagued him so; and what you wrote to Hu. about his hiding in the boat when you all went on shore, and they wanted him to go to the Chinese temple."

Oswald looked grave, as he answered, "If I tell you about him, you will have a sad story for your last."

"I like sad stories," said Minnie. "But why is it sad? He didn't forget the text written inside his watch, did he, and get naughty, like those others?"

"No, not he. I see you remember all about him, Minnie; so you shall hear the end. What was the text written in the watch, Godfrey?"

"Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price," repeated the little boy.

"Quite right. And it was that thought which kept him from doing wrong things which he knew his heavenly Master would not like."

"Yes: it was that kept him from going to the temple," said Godfrey. "But if he had, he wouldn't have gone to pray to the idol."

"Of course not; but, as I told you, he was not quick witted, and very easily gulled, and the other boys made him believe all sorts of nonsense. If he was silly enough to believe they were going for that, it was his duty to do as he did, and keep away at any cost; and however wanting in sense the poor child was, he was brave and determined when he believed a thing to be right; and God looks at our wish to do right and serve Him, not at how much we know. But now I must tell you what a terrible end came to those boys' cruel teasing.

"I had shown Charley, on the day when he showed me

the text in his watch, another verse, which pleased him much : ' Whether we live we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord ; whether we live, therefore, or die we are the Lord's.' I shall not soon forget the way he looked up at me, and the broad smile of pleasure with which he said, ' Thank you, Mr. Raymond : I won't ever forget that.' He might be wanting in sense in many ways, but he had more wisdom about the best things than all the rest of the boys put together. I was very busy for some time after that, and lost sight of him. I have often been sorry for it since, but no doubt it was best for Charley as it was.—Late one evening, while I was keeping my watch on deck, I was suddenly startled by a white figure darting past me and flying into the rigging. The darkness was coming on, and a gale was rising ; so that I could neither see, nor make myself heard, when I hurried forward and looked up. There were voices behind me, laughing ; and when I looked round, I saw three boys standing at the top of the companion ladder. One of them, mistaking me in the gloom for the second lieutenant, called out, ' Is he up there, Mr. Newman?' ' Who?' I asked. And at the sound of the wrong voice they disappeared below, but not before I had distinguished their faces. I knew then that it was Charley who was up there in the darkness, rocking in the wind among the rigging. I shouted to him to come down,—that I was here. I suppose he turned to do so. But the wind was increasing,—we made a lurch ; and the next moment the white figure spun past me again, touched the edge of the vessel, and disappeared in the tossing waves. Before I could speak a strong man was after him, and it was not long before they were on deck again. At first we thought the poor child was dead ; but his eyes opened after a time, and he muttered something about never giving in. The hip bone was found to be broken ; and for days he lay like one stunned. About the fifth day he asked for me, and afterwards never seemed easy unless I was near him. One night I was sitting reading

by him, and he startled me by suddenly saying, 'If I had done it I couldn't have said now, 'Whether I die I am the Lord's.' 'Done what?' I asked him. Then feebly and bit by bit he told me what had been the cause of his terror. The same boys, it appears, who had been plotting together to get him into the Chinese temple, had determined not to lose their cowardly sport, and had invented a new system of persecution. They had deluded poor little Charley into believing that a carved top of an old walking-stick one of them had was a Chinese idol; and the evening he had fled from them, they had been trying to make him kneel to this, till he had escaped to the rigging as a place of refuge.

"Their punishment had come to them now; as they had to hear, day after day, the same answer to their frightened questions, 'No better;' and then, 'He is sinking gradually.' Charley seemed happy when he had spoken to me about it all; and without trying to explain anything to him, I only told him that the Lord would not forget what His brave little servant had borne for Him rather than disobey or dishonour his Master; and repeated the promise of that Master to him, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve Me, him shall my Father honour.'

A few more days passed away; and then one night, when the light* was just creeping in through the portholes, he looked up at me and the doctor, who were leaning over him, and, as I bent down to him, murmured to himself as if he were dropping asleep, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' In the morning all the ship knew that Charley Donne was dead; and his fellow-midshipmen and the doctor and I knew, too, that a servant of Christ's had gone into his Master's home, to serve Him as a son there for ever."

Oswald stood up as he ended his story; and cut short the many questions on Minnie's tongue, saying, "Now you must run, children: I heard the dressing bell five minutes ago."

As Hubert went away soon after to prepare for dinner, many thoughts were busy in his mind.

"Who is at the Grange now? have you any friends there?" Mr. Raymond, to whom the question was addressed, sat aside from the well-surrounded dinner table, and, engrossed with his paper, sipped his wine and ate his biscuits, refusing all invitations to a more substantial luncheon. Oswald sat among the children, helping meat and pudding, and keeping order when the weaker voice of the governess failed, though the order he kept was of a different kind from what pleased his brother. Getting no answer to his question, Oswald repeated it; and Hubert looked up and said,—

"There is a family there now; but we don't know them, for they keep as close as owls."

"How so, Hu.? Do they fly by night?" asked his father.

"That is more than I know, papa, as I don't. They look as melancholy as owls, all of them."

"And so stuck up, too," chimed in Osbert. "They are as proud as peacocks, stalking up to their pew in church."

"And having it curtained, too," said May.

Oswald laughed. "My chance shot has opened a battery upon them. What is their name? Have you called, Newton?"

"I! Oh no, I never call anywhere!"

"Ugh: I am thankful you didn't!" cried Osbert. "I am sure Colonel Dennis is only in the militia."

"Verify a fact before stating it, Osbert," Mr. Maynard said, as he left his place and walked to the door. "He retired from the army just before coming here: you can find his name in last year's army list."

"Now you are shut up, 'Bert," said Oswald, as the door closed behind the tutor. "But what has set you against them like this?"

"I think Osbert can tell you," said his father. "If he will take village lads of the worst sort for his companions, he must expect to hear unflattering remarks sometimes."

"I am sure it isn't that, papa," cried Osbert, indignantly. "I don't care a rap for what they say. But why won't they speak to us? There is one boy just about our age."

"Perhaps they don't think you good enough for them," said his uncle.

"As if the Raymonds, of Raymond Park, weren't good enough for anybody. Who knows what his father was? While here our family has been for centuries."

"Oh, you deluded little mortal!" cried his uncle, twisting round in his chair, laughing heartily. "Newton, wouldn't that have delighted our old grandfather?"

His brother smiled, saying, "Why, my son, don't you know who were living here before your grandfather? Nothing less than a family of Finches."

"Oh, papa!" cried Hubert, his face flushing with surprise. "I don't believe that: they were *chaf*-finches, I know."

"No chaff about it, Hu. Were you dreaming too of an ancestral home?"

"Then is that horrid old portrait in the lumber room a chaffinch?" asked May.

"To be sure. Why there is the name, Anthony Finch, on the back: no chaffinch, or bulfinch either; but a veritable goldfinch."

"But the park and village are named after us," said Hubert.

"No, no, Hu.," said his father, amused. "The only reason the place is ours is because of its name. Our old grandsire thought that other people might fall into the same mistake as yourself. Very silly, Hu. It needn't matter to us that other birds built their nests here, and that most of your forefathers feathered theirs in other lands. I sometimes wish, when I look at you all, that they had made the feathers a little thicker before they came to settle here."

Hubert laughed. "Oh, well then, all I can say is, that I have been a great greenfinch."

"Would you be kind enough to say grace, Mr. Oswald?"

said the governess. "We have been nearly an hour over dinner to-day."

"We have been studying ornithology, Miss Sturt: we will be quicker to-morrow among the rocks. And you see, Hu., if I don't knock up an acquaintance for you with your new neighbours."

"I'll do it first, uncle, if you want to know them. See if I'm not first in that house."

"Well, I'll have nothing to do with the little Irish brats," said Osbert.

Leaving the dining-room behind the others, Hubert heard the voice he loved the least call sharply, "Osbert, Hubert, go and look at the state of the breakfast-room: let it be put tidy before anything else is begun!" The sound of the hall door shutting at the same minute told him that his brother had made good his escape. With a cross "Very well, sir," he returned to the scene of his morning's work. He wandered round the table, listlessly clearing away the plentifully-scattered chips, his thoughts recalled by them to their morning's train.

"Tidying up, Hu.?" asked his uncle outside the window, stopping his quarterdeck walk on the wet gravel. "Where is Osbert? Why isn't he helping?"

"I think he is in the garden," Hubert answered from under the table, whither he had gone in search of stray chips. He had made no effort to get his help, taking a sort of moody pleasure in finishing his unpleasant job for him. Was it not following in the steps he admired and coveted the power to tread in? His downcast look told the absence of the willing heart which guided them.

"Here, give it to me," said his uncle, as he emerged from his hiding-place, and looked round for a corner to bestow his spoils. "I'll pitch it down behind this laurel. What do you say to a kite-flying on the moor this afternoon, to try the new kites? I would come too, but your father, who says he calls nowhere, is bent on having me drive him to call

on Major Yorke ; but I'll try and join you afterwards. What do you say ? ”

“ I don't know : it's no fun without you. I don't care to go with only Osbert.”

“ What nonsense, Hu. ! A week ago you might have whistled for me in vain. Osbert was enough then.”

“ Yes : but when one has been eating peaches one doesn't care to go back to apples all at once,” said Hubert, kneeling on the window seat. “ I don't like being away from you now that I've got you again.”

He drew his uncle's hand on to his shoulder as he spoke, and held it there ; and Oswald, surprised at the tremulousness of his tone, and the caressing action, wondered again to see the sudden glistening of tears in the downcast eyes.

“ What is the matter, old man ? There is something wrong, isn't there ? You have been looking mopish all the morning.”

“ I don't know,” the boy answered, fingering the tassel of the window curtain. “ Don't you know sometimes how everything seems to turn into a sort of nutmeg-grater ? ”

“ Yes : I know. But I think one finds always in that case that there is something wrong with oneself. But I must go and dress. Come up to my room, and we can talk there ; for I suppose I must rig afresh to encounter the military man and his smiling daughters.”

Hubert willingly agreed : it was like old times to play valet to his uncle.

When Oswald had chased him upstairs, and thrown him back into the big armchair, “ Now then, tell me what has turned nutmeg-grater to you,” he said ; “ or rather what is it that has made a wet day, Osbert's broken spars, and the children too many for you ? ”

Hubert was glad to avoid an immediate reply by going in search of his uncle's coat : and as he shook it out, Oswald watched him, waiting for his answer.

“You don’t think, uncle, that it was not going this morning that has been making me dumpy? I am not so babyish as that.”

“I never said it was. Come, you own there is something : speak out and tell me. What is the row? Is your father displeased about anything,—had a scolding?”

“Oh dear no : it is nothing of that sort. Indeed I don’t know that I can say what it is.” He handed Oswald the coat, and turned away.

“Hu.,” his uncle said, laying a detaining hand on his shoulder, “don’t behave like this. You know you can tell anything to me : I am only ‘uncle ;’ and if I can help you as your mother would, you know it is what I most wish to do. Don’t be afraid to speak to me.”

“It is not that I am afraid of you. You know I would sooner tell anything to you than to papa, or anyone ; but I don’t know what to tell you. It is just this, I’ve been watching you ever since you have been home.”

“I think you have, Hu. It has been a wonder if your eyes have been off me ten minutes together,” said Oswald, laughing.

“Oh, uncle, I beg your pardon : I didn’t know”——

“Nay, you watched me with the kindest intentions, old man, I am sure. But what discovery did you make?”

“Don’t laugh, uncle. It does make me so wretched to think how different I am from you. I declare, if I could say truly about myself such words as he said, and know that you honoured me like him, I would willingly have been in Charley Donne’s place, and have died with you by me. I feel so apart from you now, and quite unlike you.”

Oswald was taken by surprise at the vehement words. “Why Hu., is that it?” he asked.

“Yes :” Hubert went on, speaking fast, “I hate to think that I can’t feel as that boy and you about things. You and he felt the same about doing right. Just that you are obliged to do things because,—oh, you know !—and you like

to do them even when you don't like doing them. And then, what you said at the farm about taking His yoke. If one doesn't do that, one can't be His servant ; and it is only His servants who can be saved."

"Saved first, my boy : so His servants," Oswald said, gently, noticing the unsteady sound of the last words. "It is the knowledge that He has died for me that makes me love His service. It was trusting love to Him that gave Charley his martyr spirit of determined obedience."

"Uncle, it has been the seeing you, and what you said on Sunday night," Hubert began. Then, breaking off, "But I know I could never be like you. I could stand out against things like Charley ; but I couldn't keep on doing things I didn't like, for some hidden reason all the time. I just like to do what I like when it comes up."

"And yet you want to share your Saviour's glory hereafter. Oh, Hubert : it is shame to hear one for whom He suffered and died say that ! Won't love and gratitude make you willing to bear the self-denial of His service ? You will never see His face in joy without. It is nonsense to say you cannot. You can, when you seek the help He has promised, and the Spirit which will make you willing. Joyful quietness of heart is what He gives. Ah, Hu., what would one do without Him when grief comes ! One wants Him by one then : a Saviour known and lived for, a Friend and Brother !"

"Yes, uncle : I do want to be like you in that," the boy said, earnestly. "I don't understand how it is ; but I do think when you are unhappiest you are happier really than most other people ; just as Charley Donne was happier lying dying than" —

Hubert stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished.

"Perfectly true, Hu., if you compare two people who know the love of Christ with any who do not. A man can be in heaviness through many trials, like those St. Peter was writing to, and at the same time be doing as he said

they were,—rejoicing with joy unspeakable. It is very unspeakable joy, and one that nothing can shake or change, to know yourself saved and kept by Christ."

A loud call startled them. Oswald went to the door and shouted that he was coming.

"I must go," he said. "Hubert, you have got a notion of the pleasantness and peace of the service of Christ: come and try it. You are hanging back at the thought of the self-denial it will call for. Remember, if you fear to enter the one service for such a reason, in whose slavery you willingly remain; but if you are made free from sin, and become a servant of God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life. Your soul's salvation depends on the decision. It must be made some time this side the grave: make it for Christ now. Hu., you say you feel apart from me: don't let the division go on widening till we find ourselves parted for eternity. My decision is made: I am bound for life and death to the Lord, who has redeemed me. Let us be united in faithful service to Him, and be able to love one another when our lives here are done."

Hubert answered with a sob: "I will, I will, uncle, if I only can."

"Stay here as long as you like, and pray for help: wait on Him, and He will not fail you. There is your father calling again: I must go." He put his hand on his shoulder with an earnest "God bless and receive you, my dear boy; and don't be afraid about the denying yourself," he added: "love makes all easy. We seamen can see the force of old Rutherford's words: "The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I bear: it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour." He left him then, looking in again to say, "I should advise you presently to do as I said, and go out with Osbert and fly the kites."

CHAPTER V.

NEW FRIENDS.

And hope kept whispering in youth's ear ;
For the same sky would still be clear,
Until they reached the land.

AFTER leaving the park, the way to the moor lay up a broad grass road, deeply rutted by the stone carts, as they passed down it with their loads of limestone, bound to the distant kilns just visible in the hollow of the hillside. The air was cool and sweet after the morning's showers, and the rain drops, still hanging about the leaves and grass, sparkled in the sunlight. On the brow of the hill the road ended, and a wide stretch of broken ground, covered with gorse, and heather, and rough slabs, and peaks of grey rock, spread before the two boys and their sister, as they stood to regain their breath after their pull up hill. The soft wind blew invitingly, filling the kites, and playing with the tails as they were fastened on. There was no gloom remaining on Hubert's face as he turned to meet and welcome its fanning of his hot cheeks, and to get the sight he loved, away over the sunny country to the blue sea,—a sight only to be had from that height. His father, joking him about his fondness for it, told him that the look with which he turned at that particular spot as he reached it, was like what a captive seagull might give ; and this afternoon, May, looking up from her own kite when it was

ready to rise, and seeing him still standing with his hands clasped upon the top of his, and his eyes fixed, thought of the old comparison again. She would have been surprised, had she been able to see behind the eager eyes, to find a new hope mingled with the old one; she knew well what the old one was, and nearly as plainly as Hubert could himself, she could see him in blue uniform, with a captain's epaulets upon his shoulders. There was no likelihood of her hearing from him what the new vision pictured; but to obtain what the bailiff had owned to coveting, what the dead midshipman had won, and what his uncle's life was earning, was the desire new born that day. May called to him, laughing, "Seagull, your wings are not long enough yet to fly with: wake up and attend to your paper ones meanwhile." Hubert started, and turned to fly his kite.

As the afternoon wore on, the wind freshened, and it became a difficult matter to keep the kites, which were tugging hard at the greatest length of their strings, from crossing and tangling. May, having succeeded in moving to a safe distance, was beginning to wind up, when loud shouts from Hubert made her turn her head. "Osbert, look to your kite: quick, run forward!" The next moment the strings crossed, and she saw the boys' kites swoop downwards and land upon some distant rocks.

"Why didn't you move when I called you?" cried Hubert, indignantly.

Osbert was lying on his back on a rock, and only growled in answer, "Because lying still suited me better. Why didn't you move yourself?"

"He did," cried May, joining them; while Hubert said, "Get up now and come and help get the strings untangled."

"Wait till you grow older than I am before you try on this new dodge of ordering me," answered Osbert; "for you'll find it no go."

Hubert looked at him, startled by his tone; then with a shrug of his shoulders, wondering at the same time if he

deserved the accusation, claimed May's help, and went off with her to examine the wreck.

Osbert had been longing to have a fling at the elder-brother tone Hubert was accustoming himself to use towards him, very noticeably since their uncle had been back; but he regretted the time he had chosen for it, as he watched the two standing together, laughing and talking over their tedious job. He feared his shaft had not been felt, and that he had only left himself in solitude by it. "He shall have his lesson yet though," he muttered to himself. Hubert had felt it, however, and it made him uncomfortable.

"Who can those be: look, Hu.?" May was nodding her head in the direction of a huge mass of rock, which, from its turret-shaped peaks, went by the name of "The Castle;" from behind it two figures were advancing.

"They are the two Dennis'!" exclaimed Hubert. "I say, how pretty she is!"

He spoke truly, and May echoed his opinion as the strangers drew nearer. The two were a pleasant picture, as they picked their way slowly over the broken ground: the girl coming first, with her blue riding habit held high to avoid the gorse and sharp points of rock, the boy following, leading the grey pony, whose white bridle lay across his arm. Hardly taller than his sister, he looked a year or two older, his face was so strongly marked for a boy.

After exchanging a few words in a low tone, they turned to where Hubert and May were bending over the mass of tangled string, and then stopped, watching them from a little distance. A few minutes scrutiny, and then the girl, lifting from the ground near her a twisted end of string, asked shyly, "Could we help you, Miss Raymond? My brother often tells me I am a good hand at getting out knots."

Though at first shyly accepted, the help was very welcome, and all four were soon at work.

"I think it seems coming to an end," Hubert said, after

they had stood for some time examining each others' faces by stealth.

"I wish we had come up sooner," said their new friends, "and we could have helped you more. We have been fern hunting. Do you know where the king fern grows? We have been told it can be found here."

"Yes : I know!" Hubert cried. "If you let me have your prong I will get you a plant in no time." And running off, he disappeared behind the rocks.

"Is that another of your brothers?" the girl asked, as they seated themselves to wait for his return. She looked as she spoke to where Osbert was sauntering towards them; taking the opportunity of his brother's absence to join the party. "Oh, yes : he is the second, isn't he?"

Contrary to his determination, he was soon talking fast with the "stuck up children" of the Irish colonel; and Hubert looked and laughed when he reappeared, bearing a splendid plant of the wished-for fern.

Wrapping the root in their handkerchiefs, they placed it on the pony's back; and then the new friends must come and see it planted in its new home. It was no use objecting : come they must; and though the three looked at one another in doubt, they were soon following the grey pony with its waving load, till they stood before the large gates, beyond which fancy had often carried them, but their feet never. Inside the iron scroll work was a broad drive, nothing visible beyond but a gigantic yew hedge, the drive turning at a sharp angle, right and left. The whole place was shut in from the road by a stone wall, over which the broad branches of great limes and sycamores stretched down, above which again were just visible the old-fashioned chimnies of the Grange.

May and her brothers ceased their eager talking as the heavy gates swung back, and they found themselves following their guides along the damp path, from which all but stray rays of sunlight was excluded by the thick foliage above.

"What a pity we did not come the back way, Dermot!" said the girl. "I have the key."

"It is no matter," he answered, carelessly: "there is no one about at this time; and I wanted to see after our beauties. Do you know we left them all on the steps?"

"Oh, Dermot!" she cried, looking up at the windows, the fair face crossed by a shade of uneasy fear. But the boy only laughed, saying, "I tell you the coast is clear. Come and see our pets."

They were two small monkeys and a white-whiskered lemur, which were fastened by light steel chains to the iron scrapers beside the flight of stone steps. As May fondled the little lemur, she wondered who it was they were fearing. Was it the haughty-looking colonel? Hubert too began to feel uneasy, and asked, "Where are your ferns?"

"Oh, never mind them just now," said Dermot: "you must come in first and see O'Hara. He would never forgive me if I let you go without his seeing you."

He would not listen to their declarations that they could not think of coming in; but putting his arm inside Hubert's, fairly forced him up the steps. He, laughing, yielded, and allowed himself to be drawn on through a lofty square hall to a door opposite. It opened upon a small stone terrace, and they breathed more freely as they went out upon it, and found themselves again in the open air. As Hubert looked round, admiring the quaint formal-looking garden below them, with its sloping green lawn and hedge of yew, he saw within an open window to his left, hung with rose-coloured draperies, a tall figure pass and wheel a couch forward. He was on the point of making another remonstrance against staying when Dermot exclaimed, "Let us go in now, Geraldine: see, O'Hara is just coming down!" She at once led the way to the window, and they all followed. Hubert described what he saw there to his father and uncle some time after.

The time passed quickly by; the light was paling through

the rosy curtains unnoticed by the children, lost as they were in the new pleasure of fresh companionship. Hubert talked fast and merrily, and Dermot listened and questioned and talked too, though not so fast; but Osbert sat aside, not wanted by the girls, and cross with the boys, because he saw it was again, now as always, that Hubert was taken for the eldest. He eyed his laughing brother in silence for a time. "I say, do you know uncle said he would meet us at the 'Castle' after his drive?"

"No: he never said so to me."

"Well, he said it; and I suppose he is there now, whistling for what he may wait for."

Hubert looked his indignation. "Why didn't you say so before, Osbert? The best thing you can do now is to run back and find him."

"Indeed I shall not. If he can't find us he'll go home, unless he prefers a bed on the moor."

"Fancy treating uncle like that!" cried Hubert.

Much discussion followed, ending as Osbert knew it would. Hubert went off to find his uncle, leaving his chat and his new pleasure; and Osbert's tongue was no longer silent.

There was no uncle on the moor; and the boy might have had his lonely run for nothing, but that as he reached the high road, the returning carriage overtook him.

"Jump in, my boy: here is a hole for you. You are out late. How is it you are alone?"

Hubert told as he squeezed down between them, and Oswald said, "I am sorry you came back. We were detained, or I should have kept my appointment. Are the others home?"

"No. Shall I tell you where they are?—Only at the Grange. What do you say to that, uncle? Wasn't I right?" He had gained a pleasure in exchange for the one he had lost,—in telling his story to his two interested listeners, as they rolled homewards.

"And who was the little Irishman?" his father asked, as the carriage turned in at the park gates.

"He looks like an angel," Hubert said.

"An Irish angel, Hu. What are they like?"

"Like nothing I ever saw before," the boy answered.

"I think he is younger than we are; and there is something the matter with him, for he was carried into the room, and lies upon a couch in the window. But I can't tell you what he is like: he is beautiful, like—I can't think of anything like him. He has eyes quite soft, like old Panther's, with such long lashes, that they hide his eyes, unless he looks right up at you; and his hair is all gold colour, and he has such a nice sounding voice, and such a pretty mouth: altogether he is just like a picture. You may laugh, uncle. I never thought before much what people's faces were like; but he is quite different. And their room is just fit for him: everything is so pretty, and all one colour; and there is a smell of flowers all about too, and beautiful plants in the window."

"Such rooms are not fit for boys, Hu. You had better not go there too often, or a middy's berth will lose its attractions for you."

"No fear for me," Hubert said, as his uncle drew up the horses at their own door. "Salt water will always smell sweeter to me than any amount of flowers. I hope you liked your visit as much as I did mine?" he asked, when they had gone in; and he turned to relieve his father of his extra coat, and his uncle of the driving whip.

"No: I didn't," said Oswald.

"Don't listen to him, Hu.," Mr. Raymond said, walking to the foot of the stairs: "he has been in a bad temper ever since he went out."

"Rubbish!" said Oswald. "But I neither like the Major nor either of his daughters, and won't pretend to."

"That is all jealousy for his profession, Hu. They are army people, you know."

"And they don't forget that your father was one of them for a year,—no : nine months it was, I believe,—some thirty years ago."

"Come, now, I'm not quite so old as that comes to," said Mr. Raymond.

And his son, looking up at him, as he stood above him on the stairs, said, "You enjoyed your visit anyway, papa."

"It was pleasant, my boy. They were very kind. I care for old friends more than Oswald does, now, when I shall make none new."

"If he is bright, never remark on it, Hu. : it makes him recollect himself," Oswald said, when his brother was out of hearing. "He laughed and talked, and they toadied him past bearing."

"They have been here very often lately : they are nearly the only people papa will see."

"Well, I hate such folly : it is not honest friendship for his own sake, I can see. However, I am not Mr. Raymond of Raymond Park, so I am not likely to be troubled with much of it ; nor Mr. Finch of the same : eh, Hu.?" Oswald added, laughing, as he turned to follow his brother upstairs.

Hubert ran after him, his mind full of dancing hopes of to-morrows like to-day, seeming still to feel the small soft hand in his, as the shaded eyes looked up at him ; and he was begged to come again very soon. "If only 'Bert weren't always by," he thought to himself. "He always feels to me like a stone in one's shoe." He thought so again, and with more bitter feeling, at that same time on the following day.

There was no reason to complain of the weather when the morning broke, and in sunshine and merriment the party set out for the shore. The pleasure of all was doubled by the addition to the number of their new friends from the Grange, invited by Hubert at an early hour, at his uncle's bidding. The invitation itself, the permission to accept it,

and then the fine day, had put the usually sad-looking children at the tip top of pleasure.

It was when the warm colours were deepening in the sky to the westward, and the first bright tints were falling on the quiet sea, that Hubert stood alone upon one of the sand hills that stretched in their barren sameness for miles along the coast. He shaded his eyes, and looked round in search of his twin brother and Dermot. Far off on the sands the two elder girls were wandering in all the first delights of friendship, and he could see Godfrey busy still with his chosen occupation of shrimping; but the objects of his search had disappeared. He was turning to join his uncle, where he lay on the shining sand, when something moving on the farthest point of a reef of rock caught his eye. There it was he had told Dermot the largest sea eggs were to be found at low water: no doubt they had gone now in search of them. Once more the feeling of indignant anger rose: it had been roused very often during the past few hours. He knew he had again been outwitted by his brother's successful manœuvring; and he watched them as they climbed here and there over the rocks, with hot cheeks and an angry look on his face. Friendship and companionship with a lad of sixteen were, to a boy of Hubert's age, greatly to be coveted, all the more so that Dermot's manner had plainly shown his liking. His brother had stolen the new friend from him; he had ingeniously kept them apart: it had been so all day, and he felt that Osbert had triumphed over him. He stood thinking what to do. Should he go off to the rocks and join them. "If I do, we shall have a row for certain; yet if I don't, Osbert will keep him still." A few minutes more of still undecided thought, and then he turned and went down the sand hills, feeling very sore and injured, but meaning to keep out of the way of a quarrel. He took his way through the loose sand and yellow bent; and as he got down to the beach, left firm and dry as the tide went

out, and threw himself down beside his uncle, the angry feeling went out of him. It was a thought which came with a sudden pleasantness to him that a motive other than self-pleasing—a motive such as would have moved his uncle—had changed the direction of his steps. He sat watching the soft lapping of the little rose-tinted waves, not far from his feet, and admiring the sight quite new to him,—the sun sinking behind the sea. Oswald was sitting, his elbows on his knees, and his head between his hands, and his nephew hesitated to disturb him, guessing well whither his thoughts had flown in his half-hour of solitude; but he looked up presently, saying, “Ah, she knows now what she was wondering over once as we sat here together, looking at this sudden gorgeous colouring, coming for a few minutes, just to be washed out again: she was saying it seemed sent to make one wonder what the abiding glory will be with which our Lord will adorn the home of His redeemed.”

“She was talking something like that to me the evening before she died,” Hubert said. “I see what she meant now.”

“What was it? Tell me always anything you can remember.”

“It was only that she had said something like what you said; and that it was the sun both here and there that does it.”

“Yes: just so. And there will be no night there to put it out,” Oswald answered, with a heavy sigh, and stayed silent, thinking again; till looking round, he said, suddenly, “But indeed, Hu., I didn’t mean to begin mourning again this evening; I have been sitting alone, thinking, till the misery of it seems too bad to bear. If only I had come back to find anything left but the wanting her. But it is just a blank, and worse,—not allowed even the luxury of speaking her name, or sharing one’s grief with the one who mourns most, not able even to learn the history of her last hours. Hu., what you said to me yesterday has been

the best drop of comfort I have had since I have been home. I may feel now, mayn't I, that the one of you most mine has set out for the same goal which she has reached, and for which I am bound?"

Hubert answered the question without hesitation, with a grave, "You may, uncle."

Oswald looked at him a minute: it was quiet thoughtful determination that he saw in his face; then laying his hand on his knee, he said, earnestly, "May God have you in His keeping to the end. I thank Him from the bottom of my heart that He has led you to seek to be His. You know," he added, after a pause, "one of the last words she wrote to me was, 'Lead my children to heaven,' so you must let me help you all I can."

The boy made no answer, except to give a squeeze to the hand on his knee, and sat, with wonder thinking to himself if it were really so: that in this fresh determination and desire for obedience to the One, of whom hitherto he had hardly thought, that he—Hubert Raymond—could be obeying that old command, given so many hundred years past, "Enter ye in at the strait gate. . . . Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it." "If I have found it, and gone through it, nothing shall turn me back," he said to himself, with a feeling of awe, as the truth of the eternal nature of the choice he had made came to him; and the prayer went up in the silence of his own heart, "Jesus, keep me to the end."

The feeling of the air blowing up softly from the sea told of the sun gone down; and Oswald stood up, saying, "We ought to be going, though I am sorry to say so. The smell of the sea this evening has set me longing."

"Not to be on board again, I hope, uncle."

"Yes: it has. I wish the time had come for you to sail with me, and I would be off and never go near that dreadful house again."

"And what would the others and papa say to that? How would he like to spare you now, when you are just home?"

"Wouldn't he? He will have to spare me whether he likes it or no soon."

"Well, uncle, if you hurry away sooner than you need, I shall think you awfully cruel:" Hubert spoke, indignant at the very idea of losing his recovered companion.

"No: don't be afraid. I won't go till I must," Oswald said. "Hubert, some day when we are alone together you must tell me everything, as far as you can remember, of the last days your mother lived: will you? I can't get it otherwise; and I must know what she said, how long she was ill, whether she wanted me, and a hundred things."

"Wanted you, uncle! She was light-headed a day or two before she died; and if she called for you once, she did a hundred times. It vexed poor papa at last; but she wanted you to pray for her, and tell her some verses. Maxwell did say some, but she knew at once it wasn't your voice. I quieted her most by telling her you couldn't come, but that I knew some prayers you had taught me; and I repeated two or three of the collects: she liked them. Poor dear mamma! I would have gone anywhere to find you. Mr. Prescott was very kind when he came up: papa sent for him at last. She knew where she was next day, and only kept on saying, 'If only Oswald were here, I should be quite content: I long so for my sailor boy. You know she left you the large diamond she always wore?'"

"Her ring? No. Just you ask your father to-morrow if he has forgotten it. You were by when she said it?" Oswald asked, in a hard voice.

"Oh, yes: she told papa and me. I'll remind him: I daresay he has forgotten it. He hardly could listen to anything she said: he looked as if he did not know what he was doing; but she let me stay with her. But here is Miss Sturt carrying Nelly."

"Mr. Raymond, do you see what time it is?" began the governess, panting under the weight of her little burden. "It will be pitch dark before we get home; and here is Helen fretting for bed."

Oswald already had the child, the family's pet, upon his shoulder.

"Don't think it will be too dark for me to see to drive you all safely," he said: "there is a full moon, you know. But we will start at once. Run, Hu., and call the girls. And will you kindly collect the others, Miss Sturt?"

He started off then for the place where the horses were tethered, the child's small hands holding tight round his head. When his nephew joined him again, it was to find him laughing with the children, as he packed them into the carriage, seemingly as light-hearted as any among them.

"Bert, let your brother have the pony this time," he said, gathering the reins in his hand, as he took his seat: "he is not to be cheated of his ride again as he was this morning. You drive the gig, and follow close, for I am going fast: we are late."

"After all, then, I shall have Dermot a little," Hubert thought. "I had forgotten the ride back." He turned towards the four ponies, and unfastening the grey one, led him to his mistress.

"Should you like to do the driving, Dermot?" Osbert asked. "Godfrey could have a ride that way, and we could sit together, you see, and you can finish your story."

"By all means," said the other: "I'm quite willing. Godfrey, you can ride my pony; but mind play no pranks with him."

Hubert's head was bent low over Geraldine's skirt, the fold's of which he took a long time arranging to his satisfaction.

"That will do, thank you, Hubert: it is quite comfortable," she said. "Look, they are starting! Make haste and mount, and come and ride up with us. I am glad we shall

have you this time. Osbert and Dermot are so devoted to each other: neither May nor I could get a word from them this morning. Won't it be delicious riding home by moonlight? See: there she is just rising! Oh, what a happy day this has been!"

Hubert felt in no mood to echo the warmly assenting Yes of his bright-faced sister, as she sprang to her saddle. "Cut out again," he thought, burning with indignant anger.

He, who had always been first, to be thrust aside like this! He fed his anger as he thought over the day's doings, and knew that his brother had laid a scheme to mortify him, and put himself in his place; and then felt at last that it would be better to pay Osbert out by ceasing to feel the new friend's loss a grievance, than to let him see that he had vexed him. Geraldine's first words, as he put his pony's head into a line with hers, banished his anger, and cured his wounded pride.

"I wanted to ask you, Hubert, if you could come to-morrow and sit with O'Hara for a little in the morning, while we are at lessons? He said he thought you could, as you are having holidays now; of course, that is to say, if young Mr. Raymond didn't want you. Dermot was afraid he wouldn't like to part with you, having only just come back to you, as he seems always to want you with him. Dermot does envy you so much."

"Why?" asked May. "Because, as we used to say, Hu. lives in uncle's pocket."

While Hubert, colouring with proud pleasure, answered, "Oh, I can come, of course: I intended to, if I might. If I do like to live in uncle's pocket, he doesn't button me in."

"Then do come as early as you like: it will be a great kindness to my poor Harry," said the girl, as they set off at a gallop.

Drawing rein behind the carriages, Hubert asked, "Does Dermot like uncle then?"

"Like him? He says he thinks him the nicest man he has ever seen. Not that he used the word *nice*: he said something much stronger."

"A brick?" suggested the boy.

"No: Dermot doesn't use that sort of words. He has never had boys to talk with. He said he made him think of some description in Milton, with something about 'erect and tall' in it, and that he would give anything to have such a man as his brother."

"Because he is six feet two?" asked May, laughing.

"No, no: it is the sort of man he is. We have never seen anyone like him."

May thought if the Colonel were the only man they knew, they certainly had not.

"And he is so kind and merry with the little ones, and so friendly; not in the least stiff, and yet has that good sort of graveness I do like to see in a man, though he laughs and jokes more in an hour than Dermot does in a whole day."

"He is grave enough just now, poor uncle; only he wants to be jolly because we are all together!" said Hubert.

"Yes: he was looking awfully glum when I passed in front of him shrimping," said Godfrey, forgetting for the moment the embarrassing dignity of being mounted on Dermot's big pony. "I roared to him; but he didn't move."

"We were watching him and you," Geraldine went on, "a little before we started from the shore; and Dermot said then, that to have a man like that for his companion, who would talk to him and listen to him as he was doing with you, would make him happier than anything else, excepting going to college. He only has me, and is longing to get among men."

Oswald's whip gave the signal for a fresh start, and nothing more could be said. As Hubert rode on in silence, his content was perfect. Who could be happier than he?

And how should any jealousy of Osbert's trouble him? Loved best by the one whom all admired, envied and looked up to himself for that very reason, taken into his uncle's confidence, and treated as his friend,—a fresh bond now uniting them, and prospect of more continued intercourse in a year or two, when the interests of the same profession would bind them still closer together. What greater happiness could he desire, or one more sure and unchanging?

As he dismounted at the end of their long ride, and heard their young guest repeat to Oswald, in answer to his hope that she had not overtired herself, that it had been the happiest day she had ever spent, he could now, without thought of Osbert or Dermot, give his hearty assent.

"If you think so, Hu., make it longer, and walk down with me to the Grange. We will see you home, Miss Dennis. No, 'Bert, don't you come: I want to talk to Hu. coming back. You had the end of your story from Dermot, and now I want the end of one Hu. was telling me. Run in and tell them to have supper ready: we shan't be long."

The rest of the tale interrupted on the shore was told on the way back under the park trees, and on the moonlit slopes, where May, watching for them from the dining-room window, wondered at the many pauses in their walk, and marvelled what they could have so interesting to talk about.

After that night, Oswald's mourning lost more than half its bitterness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRANGE.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast :
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

"I DO not think this is dead after all : I am sure I saw it move ; and the sea-egg has made himself look so beautiful ! Oh, do come and look, Gerry !"

The little speaker lay on his couch, a large basin on a chair by his side ; he was eagerly watching the movements of the inhabitants of the china 'pool, only just recovering from their journey from the coast. His sister sat before a table covered with books, busy writing.

"Isn't it, dear ? I am glad of that. But you must not talk to me now : I will look at it presently."

She answered without moving her head, and the child said, pettishly, "There is no use in your coming to sit here if you won't talk. I wish Hubert would come : you said he would. I wish you had no lessons to do."

As he spoke, the door opened, and Dermot came in, slamming it after him ; and his little brother looked at him, wondering, as he flung himself into a chair by his side, pushing aside the basin of sea water so roughly, as to run the risk of sending its contents upon the floor.

"What is it, Dermot ?" he asked.

Geraldine could guess only too well, and looked up, saying, sadly, "Why don't you try to be more patient, dear? You have been making him angry with you again."

"Patient!" the boy repeated. "Am I to be treated for ever as if I were a child in pinafores, and not allowed to open my lips? I can tell him I won't stand it much longer. Why should I be cooped up like a prisoner? It is like a fully-fledged rook up there, in those elms, being told to stay quietly in its nest now in the summer-time, when its wings are grown, and fit for flight; to tell me I must stay here, and refuse me the right to go out into the world, and try my strength among others. The rook would spread its wings, and take its flight, and so will I."

"Oh, Dermot: it makes me tremble to hear you talk so!" his sister said.

"I can't help it, Gerry. I had my eyes opened yesterday. It was like taking a look into life to hear that young Mr. Raymond talk. I have been imploring again to-day that I may leave this and go anywhere, and match with other boys, and he refuses. It shan't go on like this."

As he finished speaking, there was a heavy step outside; he started to his feet, and made his escape into the garden, nearly knocking Hubert over as he sprang up the steps. Dermot made no pause for him, but ran on; and Hubert stepped into the room just as the stiff figure of Colonel Dennis appeared at the opposite door. At sight of him, he wished he could have followed Dermot; but the dreaded introduction was gone through: he was invited to come whenever he liked, and the Colonel turned to the couch.

"I am grieved to see you lying down, my son. Has the pain returned? Mrs. Wibmer said you had been suffering in the night."

While his father was speaking, O'Hara continued his contemplation of his new pets; and when he paused, merely lifted his eyes a moment, saying, "I tell that old lady she mistakes snoring for groaning."

"Then you are better again now. I hoped as much from the colour in your cheeks. How have you been employed this morning?"

"Quite pleasantly, thank you, which is more than all people could say, I imagine," answered the child, shortly.

"Have you any more Latin ready for my correction yet?"

"A few lines; but not worth showing. I have been busy with other things."

"But, O'Hara, I desired now that your particular attention should be given to the dead languages: you must be making up for lost time. You know far less at twelve than most children of six." Then turning to where Hubert still stood, with Geraldine beside him, Colonel Dennis asked, "Your father is a very good scholar, is he not? I have been told he took a high class at Oxford. I suppose he takes a great interest in your education?"

"I don't know, sir. He leaves that to our tutor, I think. Mr. Maynard tells him now and then to scold us, or praise us."

O'Hara looked up at him, asking, "Of which do you get the largest share?"

"About equal, I suppose, between us."

"Rather different from you, Madame Gerry. The scale of scoldings would weigh the heaviest, wouldn't it?"

The girl looked pained, and shook her head at him, her father answering for her: "Constitutional indolence is often a drawback to the pleasures of study; but your sister will, I hope, now make an effort against what has hitherto kept her back,—to her loss, and to my great disappointment."

Geraldine's burning blush was painful to see. Both boys did see it; and turning to his father, and speaking with smothered anger, her little brother asked, "What were the pleasures of study to you, sir, at her age? Didn't you like going picnicing better than muttering your Greek verbs, like a monk in his cell over his beads?"

The Colonel's face darkened; and after a minute's pause,

he rose, saying, "I think after all that Mrs. Wibmer must have been right, and that my little son has been irritated by suffering to-day, till he has forgotten how to speak as a little boy ought. I will come and see him again when he has remembered himself. Geraldine, ask your guest to stay and dine with you." \

The door closed; and raising himself on his elbow, "How long shall it be, Gerry, before I learn to speak as a *little* boy ought?" O'Hara asked, laughing, trying to get a sight of his sister's face. But her back was turned to him, and she made no answer. "Geraldine,—darling Gerry!" he cried. "You are not angry with me? I did not mean to make him say that about indolence. Do come here. Oh, I haven't made you cry? Do come to me, please." He spoke in real distress, and his sister went to him, kissed his forehead, and then hurriedly left the room.

If there was one feeling in Hubert's mind stronger than another after his devotion to his uncle, it was fond admiring respect for his handsome scholarly father. Now left alone with O'Hara, he sat looking at him with a sense of shame, which kept the colour in his face, as if to have listened to the child's impudent tone to his father had been treason to his own. His feelings relieved themselves in, "Harry, how could you?"

"Could what? Why, Hubert: why do you look so horrified? I must fight for my darling Gerry. He tyrannizes over them till I feel wild. Anyhow he shall never trample upon me; and I'll do my precious dead languages when I choose. He doesn't know that Dermot teaches me in the evenings, when we are shut in here cosy. I read Xenophon with him then; and the Colonel thinks I just know the first declension, and make mistakes in that."

He laughed merrily as he spoke, and Hubert could not help joining, the roguish drollery of his dimpled cheeks and half-closed eyes setting him off again when he tried to look grave. The hour's talk which succeeded let him into

many of the secrets of their new friends' most unhappy home. He stayed to dinner, but left soon after, saying he had promised his father to be back in time to join him in his ride.

This new friendship proved one of the chief pleasures of the three holiday weeks; and as each warm summer day was left behind, with its pleasant hours over, they seemed much too short. To Hubert it was hard to spend a day without finding himself at some time or other passing round through the square garden, and in by the French windows. It was the little occupant of the couch that was the attraction. Dermot he hardly saw; and he found too, as Osbert soon did, that Dermot out of doors was a very different companion from the one they found in O'Hara's room: often dull and weary with hours of hard work, and anger against his father, which he hardly took the trouble to hide, making him seem sullen. Since the day of the picnic, when the sight of another and a freer life had, as he said, opened his eyes to the close bondage in which he was held, his discontent had risen into nearly open rebellion.

The wild extravagant course of an older son, the favourite of his parents, had set Colonel Dennis against school and college training, laying to it, as he did, the misery he had borne for years, and the sudden and shocking ending which had blighted the young life. His wife's health of mind and body had given way under the bitter sorrow; and she lived separated from her children in one wing of the house, where they never saw her. Colonel Dennis sold out of the army at once after his son's death, and, principally on his wife's account, adopted his present secluded mode of living, devoting himself to the education of his remaining children, and determining to keep Dermot as long as possible under his own eye.

To O'Hara the new friendship was a source of great happiness. There was in him so strange a mixture of childish

simplicity, and even ignorance, about the most common things, with thoughtfulness and shrewdness, as made him a most amusing companion, whilst his gaiety and quiet humour, and his warm, clinging, outspoken affection, won upon Hubert day by day.

Oswald was greatly amused at this sudden devotion, and told his nephew one day, when the third week had nearly run its course, that he should come with him and be introduced.

"I must come and see this new friend who has cut me out," he said. "As to your father, he is quite taking it to heart that he never sees you now. If the boy could ride or cricket, I could understand it better."

"Uncle, that is just like Maxwell: he never thinks anything worth thinking of but cricket and football. I have you and 'Bert and the club fellows for that. Surely one may have one friend for something else? One isn't made all of arms and legs."

Oswald's laugh and muttered words, "Philosophers in knickerbockers," he was surprised to hear answered crossly.

"Well, why shouldn't one read and talk without being plagued about it? I don't see that it is fair of papa to want me always to ride with him every afternoon: I get sick of it."

Oswald's eyes opened. "How often have you done it lately?" he asked.

"Well, if I haven't done it just lately, he has wanted me to; and it bothers me to hear him say I am not enough with him. He actually told me last night that I was giving up caring for him: fancy that! But I do like much better being with Harry or you than sitting in the study, doing stupid things, or everlastingly riding along the roads, without speaking a word a mile at a time. I can tell you it is awfully dull."

"Yes: it is, Hu. I think I know what it must be to you from my last ten days' experience.

"Oh, uncle, I didn't know I had shirked so often! I'll go to-morrow. I did not mean to put it off upon you."

"It is not that I mind the ride: I like it, and have nothing to prevent my going; but you must not let your father miss you for too long. You have not inherited your mother's face for nothing, and must do some part of her work for him, if you can. But come, let us be off."

The effect of the visit was altogether such as to satisfy Hubert, from the first look of surprised admiration to the tender-toned goodbye, when Oswald bent to take the small hand in his: turning at once to his nephew outside the gates with "Well, Hu., if Pope Gregory had seen him, he would have given us a second edition of his words to the little Britons."

"Ah, you laughed at me for saying he was like an angel, uncle!"

"I'll try a sketch of him for you next time, if he'll let me," Oswald said.

O'Hara, too, had been equally gratified on his side: his wish was realized at last, and "uncle Oswald" more than a name to him. A succession of "so-s," with various adjectives attached, described him afresh to his brother and sister, the visit affording an inexhaustible topic for the rest of the day. Hubert from that afternoon cut the length of his visits shorter, and lessened their number for a few days; but it was hard to deprive himself beforehand of a pleasure which he knew his work would soon more than half take from him, and the freedom of which must entirely cease with regular hours. It made it more vexatious to him that it was for no special object that he felt he ought to stay away, only that it vexed his father not to have him about him, or within call if he wanted him.

It had all been very well while the first sad months had been passing by. He had valued his office of comforter, —his love called into active sympathy; and hours passed in quiet, most uncongenial to his nature, were never mur-

mured at : his father's fond looks and increasing dependence upon him paid him for all. It was different now when he had found his uncle again. Active pleasures tempted him, and O'Hara was at the Grange : the old quiet ways seemed unbearable to him. Oswald did what he could for him, but he could not take his place.

But the play-time came to an end at last, and work was to begin again on the Monday morning. It was the evening before, and Sunday quiet was in the long drawing-room. May read beside the table with Geraldine's last gift, a small black spaniel, in her lap, dividing her attention between it and her book. Hubert lay on the floor by his father's chair, where Mr. Raymond lounged half asleep ; while Miss Sturt, according to custom on Sunday evenings, sat behind the pillars with a lamp to herself, enjoying the quiet and her book. Osbert knelt in one window looking out, and Oswald stood in another doing nothing. He had just returned from his evening work at the Wood Farm, where he had gone without his follower, having turned him back at the door-steps, with the advice which Hubert had followed : "You would do best to carry your book to the study."

These two last hours of the Sunday evenings were sad times for Oswald just yet. Presently the clock struck ten ; the library door downstairs opened and shut, and the tutor's slow footfall was on the stairs.

"Uncle, I wish you'd have prayers instead of Mr. Maynard," Hubert said. "Shouldn't you like it much better, papa ? He always used to do it."

"I don't mind, my son, if your uncle wishes it," Mr. Raymond answered only half awake.

Oswald turned round : it was what he had been wishing ever since he had listened to the monotonous morning and evening reading ; and now crossing the room he asked, "You don't really mind, Newton ? I should like to take my old place, if I might,—unless you would do it yourself."

Mr. Raymond did mind very much, now that he was

sufficiently awake to take in what was being talked about ; but he only said, as the door opened, "No, no : have it your own way." Osbert informing Mr. Maynard at the same minute, "Uncle Oswald is going to read prayers to-night."

"If you have no objection to resign your post," Mr. Raymond said. "My brother has always done it for me when at home, and would like to begin again."

"Oswald adding, "Ah, I had forgotten you, Mr. Maynard, when Hu. spoke of it!"

"I have been doing it simply at Mr. Raymond's desire hitherto, and with that of course my doing it ceases," the tutor said, laying the large Bible and Prayer-book he carried in the accustomed place, and taking a seat far removed from the rest. "The bell, I think, should be rung at once : it is past time."

Taking advantage of the little bustle caused by the entrance of the servants, Oswald crossed to the piano, signing to the footman at the same time to distribute the hymn-books still ranged in their old place on the music stand. "We may as well have our evening hymn as we used," he said. "We will sing the ninth."

He had struck the first chord before his brother was aware that he had left his seat, and his troubled exclamation as he refused the book offered to him passed unheeded. The voices rose and fell softly to St. Peter's ; and then the chapter was read (the 43rd and a few verses of the 44th of Isaiah), and the children and servants found their interest roused as the fresh voice gave clear sense to the words.

As he came to the 5th verse of chapter xlv., and read the words, "One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," he paused a moment and interrupted his reading, saying, "This is rather a difficult sentence to understand, as it is in our translation ; but I found it more clearly translated the other day : 'And another shall write upon his hand, I belong to God.' I was

reading in the same book of the custom to which these words refer,—that in old times slaves had the names of their masters stained or burned into their hands; soldiers would have an honoured commander's name; or a devout idolater the name or sign of the god he worshipped. The early Christians in the same way marked their wrists or arms with the sign of the cross or with the name of Christ. I have seen a drawing of one of the old sculptures taken from the catacombs at Rome, of one of them with the Greek letters of our Lord's name marked upon his arm and dress. The modern way for us to mark on our hands 'I belong to God,' must be, not by burning or staining, but in the work to which we put them, and the way we do that work. It may be quite as plainly seen so who is the Master we serve. We have the promise that in the heavenly city 'His servants shall serve Him, and His name shall be in their foreheads;' but to be so honoured then, it must first be marked in the right way on our hands."

A few more verses closed the reading, and the customary prayer for the third Sunday in the month began; but Oswald's own words soon took the place of those of the book, and the servants as they went downstairs said, "It feels like old times to hear Mr. Oswald: his is real praying." That the tutor was displaced formed no small part of their rejoicings.

The silence that followed in the drawing-room was an uncomfortable one, while the master of the house sat with his face in his hands, till the tutor began questioning the difference of translation Oswald had mentioned.

"Oh, I am no Hebrew scholar, Mr. Maynard. Bishop Lowth was my authority. The remembrance of what he said returned to me on reading the passage."

"And I must ask you, Oswald," his brother said, looking up, "if you read prayers for me, just to read the chapter straight through without comment, and I don't wish any hymn singing."

The children exclaimed, and Oswald answered, quickly, "Why, I thought we should all like it : we always used to." Then seeing his brother shrink at the expression, he added, gently, "But of course, if you don't like it, we won't ; and I'll read straight on for the future. I only said what I did to-night because I thought it would make the passage plainer to the servants and children."

"Yes, yes : all you said was very just and useful, no doubt ; but I can't have it, nor the hymns. Never mind : you meant no harm ; and one mustn't look for refinement of feeling from a thoughtless young sailor."

Oswald bit his lip, saying aside, as he turned to take his candle, "'Thoughtless' and 'sailor' seem to hang together much as robin and redbreast do ;" and wishing good night, he left the room, Mr. Maynard saying as he went, "Prayers punctual at eight now, Mr. Oswald ; and remember, boys, in the library at seven, sharp. Monday : Greek, grammar, and Cornelius Nepos."

"Hang to-morrow !" was Osbert's exclamation, as he followed his uncle from the room. As he ran upstairs a few minutes later, Hubert came upon Oswald alone ; and hanging on his arm, followed his steps, as he paced the long passage to and fro in the dimness. "I call it a shame of papa saying we shan't have our hymns," he began, "and stopping you explaining things to us."

"No, no, Hu. I see anything pains him that seems to resemble old times ; and, of all things, let us avoid doing that. Anyway, to-morrow morning there will be no temptation to it, as, I suppose, we must be sharp over prayers as over everything else now."

Hubert laughed, saying, "Yes : we have got terribly out of training all this month. I do hate the thought of that library to-morrow !"

"Hu., is that cane safely disposed of ?"

"Half of it is splicing the bow of my kite."

"Then don't let it have a successor. It is a disgrace

that boys of your age should need to have their learning knocked into them."

"You must not think it is the lessons, uncle, indeed: he much more often threatens me with it for what he calls upstartness and disobedience."

"Wrongly called, Hu? Such sins are worse in a sailor's eyes than idleness; and you may thank him, if he knocks them out of you before you come aboard."

"I shall forget all my navigation," Hubert interposed, not fancying the turn their talk had taken.

"There will be wet days," his uncle answered, "when we may have a little work at it; but Latin and Greek are the first things now. There will be plenty of time for navigation in a year or two."

"Shan't I just go wild when I am fourteen, or earlier than that, perhaps?"

"I shall think you are so now, if you spin about like this. Can't you walk straight? Hu., you say you hate the thought of the library to-morrow. I wanted to ask you, have you been thinking how to begin your time there in a new spirit? You know I don't want to preach to you; but I wanted to give you a reminder this evening, before you meet afresh the old temptations. Have you been thinking of it to-day?"

The low earnestly-spoken answer was unexpected.

"Yes: more than I have ever thought about anything, I think. But I can't help being afraid. You have no notion how I feel when Mr. Maynard looks up at me from under his eyelids, with his eyebrows up. You can see he despises one. It makes me say things just to get rid of the boiling feeling that comes all over."

"Well, never mind about that now: perhaps he will refrain from putting his eyebrows up, if you give him no cause to despise you. Teach him to honour you by well-prepared work, and words ruled by obedience to His laws to whom you belong."

"Like what you said to-night, uncle. I was thinking of the library while you were talking," Hubert said: the darkness favouring the shyly-given confidence.

Oswald had to think a minute what he had said.

"About the sign on the hand?" he asked.

"Yes," said the boy. "Though, I declare, it would hurt less to burn the whole sentence on one's arm than to be obedient, and all the rest, with Mr. Maynard."

"Make it easier by keeping in mind Whom it is you are obeying in obeying him. You remember about the viceroys and lieutenants. You will learn to know that there is a satisfaction if not a pleasure in it, when the obedience and respect are rendered willingly."

"Willingly?" repeated Hubert, doubtfully.

"He works in us both to *will* and to do of His good pleasure. The renewed man can say, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.'"

They walked the length of the passage in grave silence, and then Hubert said, "Uncle, there seems to me such a lot of things to learn, when you say those things as if you understood them."

"I have been planning how to help you to understand them too; but anyway we can both understand what it is to pray for help to do what we know to be right, and then to try and do it."

"Yes: I do do that. I mean about the praying; but then"—

"Hubert, is this going to bed?" said his father's voice, in the dark behind them.

"I haven't said good night to uncle yet, papa."

"And it is an undertaking always requiring half-an-hour to accomplish," said his uncle. "Come, say your two words and be off."

Hubert said them, but lingered on, holding by his father's arm now,—a sure way, as he well knew, to escape being sent away at once,—and chattered on, till he

began teasing his father to send him to a naval school next year.

"You see, papa, it won't be so very long before I am thirteen; and it certainly would be a good thing: I should have a much better chance in the examination."

"It would be a good thing, Mr. Silly, for you to be in bed," his father interrupted him with. "There, get along with you!" and he loosened the hold on his arm.

"But really, papa"——

"No, not another word. You can't get up in the morning if you sit up at night."

Then Hubert went.

"Oswald, it is unwise of you encouraging these notions of change in that boy's mind," Mr. Raymond said, when the brothers were left alone together.

"It is not much encouragement from me that he needs," said the other. "I never saw a boy more cut out for a sailor."

"You seem to have taken it very much as a matter of course."

"So it is, isn't it, a promise made when he was in the cradle?"

"And so at a time when he had no voice in it."

"Of course not," said Oswald. "But what do you mean? The only conditions were suitable health and inclination."

"Just so," said Mr. Raymond. "And what may be at present but a mere fancy, if encouraged may be so fostered as to be thought by the boy himself to be his real inclination, and turn out after all to have been nothing but a childish fancy, and end in misery."

"Misery!" Oswald repeated, indignantly. "If Hubert is not safe to find happiness at sea, I should like to know who will."

"Of course, the higher the nature, the more suited for a sailor's life, you would say. But you must bear in mind that as unfortunately the choice for that life, if to be made at all must be made in childhood, it becomes a duty all the

more imperative to refrain from biasing either way the very easily influenced childish judgment."

"That duty should have been enforced upon the household twelve years ago then; for there is not the shade of a doubt about his bias now. You use the word *childish*," Oswald said, as they reached the end of the passage, and stood looking out into the starlight; "but Hu. is the last one I think of whom to use it. I take him to be quite as capable of a fixed determination as you or myself: he thinks for himself, and acts as he decides."

"He has grown in character greatly this last half year. He has been much with me; and constant association with a grown person soon tells on one so quick and bright as my precious boy is; yet it is strange how 'Bert keeps before him in his books."

"Another proof that his destiny is well chosen," Oswald answered, absently,—a sudden vision of trouble in the future rising before him; but he turned from it and went on. "You might use the word childish of Osbert very truly, with all his quickness at his books: he is fonder of playing in the nursery than Godfrey is."

"It is all for the sake of companionship," the father answered. "There are unfortunately very few boys round us for him. I wish he were not quite so fond of the village."

In the low room, in the story above,—the boys' room, as everyone called it,—Hubert, sitting before their table with his Bible open upon it, read the evening chapter once again, and got into bed at last with a cross inked upon his wrist, where it would be hidden by the shirt sleeve.

As was to be expected, both boys were near being late next morning: the clock had struck as they reached the library door, and opened it, fully expecting a scolding. It was an agreeable surprise when their uncle looked up, and gave them his pleasant good morning.

"What has come to Mr. Maynard?" the boys exclaimed. "Are you going to teach us?"

"Yes, for half-an-hour. Get your Bibles. Run for them, 'Bert; and you, Hubert, put your other books ready, and tell May to come too."

From that morning Mr. Maynard, opening the door with the stroke of the half-hour, was sure to find those four with heads bent over their opened books, or raised in question and answer.

Of the three, Oswald soon saw who followed him farthest in his teaching. To May it was a time of quiet enjoyment, and the lessons were welcome from loved and honoured lips; Osbert was fond of learning, and enjoyed the animated varied teaching; but in Hubert, though he would have found it hard to say where, his uncle saw there was a difference. He was no more attentive, and answered the questions no better than his brother and sister; but his attention grew most eager when their's began to flag, and his questions were asked when their's nearly ceased, upon what they spoke of, as "not the history part."



CHAPTER VII.

THE MARKED WRIST.

There lives a Judge,
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed.

OCTOBER had come with its chilly evenings : the rose-coloured curtains were drawn close, and in O'Hara's bed-room a bright fire was burning in the grate. It was there that Hubert found him one evening, as he hurried in carrying a roll of paper in his hand. The business of undressing was just over, and the nurse was tucking him into bed, and it was only under protest that she consented to leave them alone together, with a charge to the one boy not to forget his prayers, and to the other, not to stay long.

"I've brought the chart," Hubert said, as he drew up a chair to the bedside. "I've finished the colouring, and Mr. Maynard has put in those two dates for us ; but he says he could tell me some better way of doing one."

"Make him tell you then, for I like doing it ; and we'll begin another. Now spread it open. Wait an instant though : I'll say my prayers first, or I shall be sure to forget. I did one night, and Mrs. Wibmer was so angry with me, and said I should die in the night, perhaps, if I forgot again."

Without more delay, shutting his eyes, and joining his hands before him, he muttered in an undertone his form of words : first, the Creed, followed by the Lord's Prayer, and

then a childish hymn,—no doubt learned long ago from his mother's lips.

"Now then for the chart," he said. "I'm so glad I've not forgotten that to-night. Do you think it true, Hu., what Mrs. Wibmer said about dying?"

"No," said Hubert, and sat silent, unfolding the paper, and flattening it out upon his knee: then he asked, "Shall I read you your chapter, Harry, first?"

The child looked up, wondering.

"What chapter? No: let us look at this now."

"I meant a chapter out of the Bible. Don't you read one every night?"

"No. Why should I? That is the Book they read in church, Gerry says. I used to hear stories out of it when I was little. No: I want to talk about this now."

Hubert spread out the paper in front of his companion, who, delighted with the effect of their joint production, lay and examined it, talking on merrily, while Hubert listened unheeding. The boy's words had startled and shocked him; and as he watched the sweet face he so loved, and recalled his uncle's words after his first sight of it, he thought to himself, truly he is as badly off as Pope Gregory's British slaves, if he hardly even knows what the Bible is, except that he knows the Creed. I wonder what he understands of it."

"Hu., what are you studying so? You are not answering what I say."

They were still talking, and O'Hara was deep in a long story, when Dermot looked in, saying, "Mr. Oswald Raymond is downstairs, and he is waiting for you, Hubert."

"Waiting for me? What has he come for?"

"He says he has come for you. He doesn't seem in any particular hurry," said Dermot.

With an uncomfortable wonder at the unusual proceeding, Hubert rose, saying, "Then I had better say good night. Is it late, I wonder?"

"Somewhere about nine, I think," Dermot said.

"Nine? You don't say so!" And Hubert left them hurriedly.

Through the cool night air Oswald and his nephew walked home together. Hubert speculating, as they went on in silence, whether uncle were vexed with having had to come after him. He had never stayed so late at the Grange before; and he was relieved when Oswald broke the silence, asking, "Did your father say if he were any better before you came out? I didn't like to worry him with questions when I went to him."

"I don't know," said Hubert, startled. "Is he ill?"

"You never mean to say you haven't seen him all day!"

"No: he didn't come in to lunch; and I have been so awfully busy. I left the house as soon as my lessons were done. Mr. Maynard has been so bothering to-day."

"Come, I say, Hubert, this is too bad," Oswald said, stopping in his walk. "It is all very well to be eager or forgetful, and I'd shield you through it; but this is pure selfishness. You have run mad after that Grange. No wonder your father is put out: you've not been near him all day! And he wanted you too for a message to Cox: I must just go on there now myself."

Hubert looked up frightened.

"Uncle, what is the matter? I didn't know papa was ill, or I would have gone to him at once. And I am sure you needn't have come all this way after me: I am very sorry you did."

"Believe me, I did not come on your account: I don't think you are likely to get lost or killed. Your father has one of his worst headaches to-day."

That said enough. Hubert could imagine well what had passed, and how his uncle had been "bothered," as he expressed it.

"What was it I was to say to Mr. Cox? I can run there, and be back in no time."

"No: you must go in and report yourself. Drowning was the least evil that could have happened to you."

"Uncle! But if you go in, you can say I am living still. What was the message?"

"It was answers to his questions. Now here we are. Run in and say where I am gone; and I should advise you"——

But Hubert cut his advice short with earnest pleading that he might at least so far undo his neglect, and save him any further walking; and Oswald hesitated, and then relented. The message learnt, Hubert was off down the slope. Oswald met him in the hall when he returned, saying to him, "You must go to your father now forthwith; and remember he has had a day of much suffering, and other troubles too, and you have added to them. It is not only your not having been with him, but learning from Mr. Maynard, when he did send for you, that you were upstairs in disgrace again greatly vexed him. Come to my room when you leave him, and tell me how he is. Don't stay long, or you will be late down again to-morrow."

"I wish you would come too."

"Nonsense: I've wasted time enough already over you." So Hubert went on alone.

It was the truth which Oswald had said. The day had been one of much suffering to Mr. Raymond; and the night had settled down over the park, bringing more quiet in the yellow woods and over the green slopes than to their owner. The sight of him crouched in a low chair before his bed-room fire, his head in his hands, vexed Hubert while it grieved him. He was already vexed as much with circumstances as with himself; and now stepping up to his father, he asked, abruptly, "Are you better, papa?"

"Hubert, Hubert, my own boy!"

The close pressure of his father's arm round him carried with it far more reproach to him than any words could have done. He stood by him silent, wondering what he

ought to say, earnestly wishing he would give him a good scolding and have done with it, instead of the quiet kiss upon his cheek.

"So you are really better, papa?" he asked at last, tired of the silence which his father seemed to have no intention of breaking. "Uncle said you had been ill all day. I had no notion of it, or I should have come hunting after you. You really are better?"

"The pain is bearable now; but it is not pain alone that has made the day's suffering to me, as I told Oswald, nor business troubles either. But he will not, or cannot, understand causes of pain which would be no cause of it to him."

"Papa, it was just he who told me you had been so bad all day."

"Oh yes, he can understand a headache; at least he can believe in one (I don't suppose he ever felt it), and is as kind and pitiful as can be, poor lad; but as to anything else—sorrow slips over him like water over a rock. How should he understand its work upon another?"

Hubert was on the point of indignant exclamation, recalling the evenings in the park and at the point; but a feeling that to speak of either would be a betrayal of confidence, stopped him. He had begun also latterly to shrink from any discussion about his uncle, becoming conscious as he was, that jealousy of the love he gave him prompted the constant depreciating remarks. He felt himself disloyal even to listen to them; but he could not stop his father saying what he would. And if he chose to speak of his uncle to him as if he were his elder brother, instead of his own only one, how could the boy hinder it? He remained silent a few moments now, and then said, "I am so sorry things have been bothering you. And I am sure I must have worried you more, keeping out late; but I had no idea how the time had gone. But, papa, if I am ever late, you may always know where I am."

But Mr. Raymond's wearied quietness had deceived his son, and he had quite miscalculated his mood.

"I shall know nothing of the sort," he answered, shortly, "but simply forbid your being out late at all. Don't leave the park after your tea during the winter, unless with my express permission, or that of your tutor."

Hubert was taken aback; a sudden rush of rebellious anger rose within him, and in silence was his only safety. When he did speak, it was only a muttered grumble about Mr. Maynard keeping him so close, and there being no time for anything, if he didn't go out after tea.

"If you did your work as you ought, Hu., and as Osbert does his, you would have time enough and to spare. Mr. Maynard has been complaining about you again. He says you are growing grievously inattentive, and wilfully careless; and that your constantly ill-prepared work deserves severer and more disgracing punishment than turning the lessons back and banishment."

"Old bore!" Hubert muttered, crimsoning. "He might at least have held his tongue till you were well."

"I was asking why I never saw you now, and he said he had been obliged to send you upstairs twice to-day; and now, I suppose, all this wasted time this evening will make it as bad for to-morrow."

"He has got so cross of late, papa, and gives us such immense lessons."

"You began so very well after the holidays. He owned himself—an extraordinary admission from him—that the rest had done you both good; and of you he spoke specially then, as evidently much pleased with you. How is it you have changed?" Hubert remained silent, looking into the fire. "Hu., you don't know how it grieves me to hear a word against you—your mother's own boy. You are far, far too dear to me for me to bear to lose you from me like this, knowing you in disgrace. I cannot stand it, Hu.: don't let it be again. I have wanted you to-day; and

if your tutor had gone out, I believe I should have ended by sending for you, weak though he would have thought me."

Would Hubert have been glad? He bent down, and picked up bits of stick from among the ashes, pushing them in where the coals burnt fiercest: he did not care to meet his father's look. Up in the far-away empty room—the place of banishment—he had been told to stay till his second ill-learned lesson was perfect; and with that only limit it was a convenient opportunity to gain a quiet hour for finishing his work for O'Hara. As tea-time drew near the lesson was learned, and heard by Mr. Maynard in his bed-room, as he prepared for dinner. The permission then given to go to tea, accompanied as it was by a sharp reprimand for the amount of time wasted, was hardly heard before he was off to the Grange. As he had said, it might have stopped his flying footsteps had he known that his father was spending the evening on the study sofa.

"Don't, my son: you are burning your face. What are you thinking of, Hu.?" Mr. Raymond questioned, after some minutes had passed. "You will try and work more steadily, and not get yourself imprisoned; for I cannot spare you."

"I've not been so very often in prison; and to-day it was only because Mr. Maynard was so snappish about every little fault."

"I don't care how it was or why it was," Mr. Raymond answered. "All I care is to have you with me, as of old—before your uncle came home."

"I am sure uncle never keeps me from you," the boy answered, firing up.

"I don't care what it is that keeps you, dear son; but I miss my boy about me, and I want him back. Or has it grown to be a case yet of

" 'Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together.
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short: '

"eh, Hu.?"

"Papa, how can you say such things?" Hubert cried, rising and throwing his arms round his father's neck. "Whatever else is the matter with you, your breath is not short yet. How much you look like 'crabbed age,' don't you!" he said, lifting one of his father's hands to show him, and putting it to his lips before he dropt it.

His peace was made then. He was held close a moment, and a fervent "God bless my own boy" accompanied the good night which they exchanged then; and Hubert slipped away, and reached his uncle's door, feeling, he would have found it difficult to say how; but certainly wishing that the Grange and O'Hara's name had not been so markedly kept out of the conversation. He found Oswald busy at his writing table.

"How is papa?" he asked.

"Better, he says," Hubert answered. And shivering with the change from the warm room, he curled himself into the big arm-chair, and stared gloomily at the candle.

"It is not altogether pleasant: is it?" Oswald said, glancing up at him from his writing.

"What, uncle: the cold?"

"No: getting one's deserts."

"What do you mean? He didn't say anything about the Grange."

Oswald laughed.

"So you think you got off scot free, if the Grange isn't spoken of."

"I just wish he had, instead of going and making it horrid to" —

There he stopped: he could not bear to allow to himself that any change in the pleasant freedom of the last two months must be made, except in the matter of that one prohibition which it angered him to think of.

"Hu., I am afraid now you must have escaped without the good scolding you deserved, or I must have received so

much of it for you already that what remained has not been heavy enough for you to feel."

If Mr. Raymond spoke of his brother too often as if he were his son, Oswald quite as often forgot that he and his nephew were not on the same level: he was so much nearer to his age than to that of the brother who had filled a father's place to him all his life. Hubert was quite accustomed to this, and said, "If he scolded you then, it was a shame. I told him it wasn't you kept me from him. I know it's just a horrid bother altogether. And how on earth to steer straight among it all, as you would say, is more than I know,—what with Daddy, and lessons, and Harry, and you!"

"A terrible embarras de richesses, truly," Oswald said. "Come, if you expect me to stop my work to listen to your groanings, you are much mistaken."

"But, uncle, what am I to do? Do tell me! I can't go on for ever sticking at papa's elbow. I wish, with all my heart, he wouldn't say such things, and make one feel wicked, if one isn't always with him."

"Yes: all day—from morning till night," Oswald said, lifting his eyebrows.

"But what must I do?" said Hubert, in a melancholy whine.

"Do what is right."

"That is easy enough to say. But if I am always to be with papa, I may as well give Harry to the winds."

"Poor little boy! He would hardly thank you, this autumn weather."

"Uncle, how you do provoke me!"

"So, perhaps, do you me. I hate to see a fellow clinging on to a leaky boat, instead of owning it good for nothing."

"But if I have been wrong, how am I to know what to do? When papa wants me, Harry wants me; there are lessons all day, and I want to be with you."

"My dear Hu.," his uncle said, "I am much too busy to

give you any good advice to-night, if that is what you want. There are plenty of old rules to help you, if you want help : rules as to honouring and obeying fathers, being diligent in business, submitting to those that have the rule over one : but you have the Book, and know them now well, I think. Perhaps there is one though you mayn't remember, without which obedience to all others is little worth : 'With *good will*, doing service as to the Lord.' Now go you must."

Before going to his room, Hubert paid a visit to the library, to fetch his books ; and with more than one look of envy towards his brother's quiet head on its pillow, settled himself in the corner farthest from him, to work for an hour at the lessons for next morning. All was perfected at last ; and as he shut his books, with a long yawn, and squeezed his knuckles into his burning eyes, "There is one of uncle's rules obeyed, anyway," he said. "I've been sharp enough over that business." He stood up then, beginning to prepare for bed, thinking over what had passed that day, with gloomy downcast face. Unbuttoning his shirt sleeve, the faint mark still left of the faded cross upon his wrist caught his eye, and his thoughts changed their drift. He stayed quite still for a long time, staring at the candle upon the table before him, till the flame doubled and trebled, as his eyes grew misty with tears. What joyful hopes and glad determination had been his when that cross was marked ! Now what proof remained to him that the words which it signified were true for him ?—"I belong to God." His memory, he felt, gave true judgment upon him, when it recalled the weeks passed of which the acts of each hour said, "I am my own." Selfish, unkind, sneaking, disobedient, was his verdict upon himself ; "and uncle, papa, and Mr. Maynard must think the same. And what must He think of me, whom I promised, and did really mean, so much to obey ?"

Hubert learnt that night what the pain of repentance is, and the shame of the confession : "I have sinned, and am

no more worthy to be called Thine," while he learnt also afresh, as he knelt in the dark beside his bed, the pricelessness of the truth to a sinner, that though we have gone astray, and turned to our own ways, yet the Lord hath laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all, and is just to forgive us our sins. As he lay down at last, and drew the bed clothes over his ears, he muttered to himself, "That cross, and more, shall be rubbed in with gunpowder to-morrow. I will have something to remind me, if I can forget like this."

A feather floating on a stream, or a thistledown blown through the air, is quite enough to show to watching eyes the direction which either the water or wind is taking; and when Hubert, in after years, looked back at the self he had left with his childhood, he could recall the apparently trifling events of the day when the blue cross, which no time wore out, was marked, as the first clear tokens of the changed direction of his course for life. He gave greater and more costly proofs, in later days, of the truth which that sign, with the three letters in the angles, bore to him; but none that showed more decidedly whither his face was set. The path of the just, like the shining light, must begin with the faint dawning before it can shine more and more unto the perfect day. The happiest path is the one that is earliest chosen, and kept with most decision towards the one goal, —the presence and the likeness of the Saviour.

There were white mists lying in the hollows, and the early morning air had a feeling of frost in it, as Oswald hurried into the library, following the tutor. He had overslept himself; and the two boys and their sister were using their unemployed time in a jumping match, and looked up with blank faces at sight of the first comer.

"We really had nothing to do. We were only playing till uncle came: we did our reading, but we couldn't question ourselves," were the rapidly-spoken excuses; while a few words from Oswald explained the early game in lesson time.

"And I am rather surprised to see you down, Hu., after your late hours."

"Yes: I was down in time, uncle."

"I am glad to hear it," said the tutor. "There is a long list of crosses against your name for punctuality."

Hubert knew that, and was silent.

"Let Osbert begin, and spare me Hubert a few moments: will you, Mr. Maynard?" Oswald asked. "I won't keep him a second."

"I feel hardly inclined to grant him an indulgence: he has little deserved it."

"My lessons are known, I assure you, sir," Hubert said, eagerly; guessing why he was wanted. "You may trust me: I won't stay."

"Very well: for this once."

It was into the window of the dining-room that Oswald led the way, with, "See here: it has come. Last night, Foster says." The *it* was a new gun, lying in its case; and Oswald took it out, as delighted as a boy with his new possession. The few minutes granted were far too short for the examining of every part which Hubert wanted to give; but his uncle drove him off with the consoling reminder that it was half-holiday, and they could start directly after lunch.

"And oh, uncle, just give me a pinch of powder before I go."

"I have got none here. What do you want it for?"

"Oh, I only want a pinch. I am not going to burn it."

And as he spoke, he made a dive into his uncle's pocket; and producing his flask, emptied some into his hand.

"There, I know where your things are better than you do yourself."

"And very careless of me to leave it there."

The work went on in the library till the ringing of the bell. As they moved, Hubert, waiting a minute behind his brother, drew himself up with a deep breath, and hurried to get through the sentence he had been planning to speak.

The few words about "my bad work" and "rudeness to you yesterday" were said; and Mr. Maynard, turning to listen as he was leaving the room, made answer, "Your uncle might have spared his lecture. The only apology I ever care for is humility, and obedience for the future. However, you can tell him now that you have done as he told you."

The quietness of Hubert's answer surprised himself.

"Uncle said nothing about my speaking to you: we weren't talking of anything of the sort. I thought I ought myself. You shall have the sort of apology you like."

The tutor's grave, "Very well: I hope so," was not particularly encouraging.

Not long before the early dinner hour, Oswald, going into the breakfast-room with his new purchase in his hand, found Hubert by himself, with account books and purses before him, in the window.

"What are you after now?" he asked. "Is this some refined method of teaching arithmetic?"

"It is only May's Saturday penance. She always wants me to add up her columns after her," Hubert said, in a worried voice; and, as sure as fate, if we begin, Miss Sturt comes for her about some nonsense or other."

"Does May keep the books? What a notion!" Oswald said, laughing. "Come, my boy, let me take your place: this is not what one wants after Latin and algebra all the morning."

"Oh, thank you! I hope May won't mind."

And his uncle noticed, as he rose, that he looked miserable enough to threaten tears.

"Hu., there is something wrong?"

"Don't ask me, uncle, or I shall make a baby of myself. You shouldn't have brought the gun in here."

"The gun? What's up? No: you don't mean he has gone that length: do you? Positively this is too absurd."

"Oh, do you think so? Then mightn't I come?"

"What did your father say? Did you tell him you were coming with me?"

"No: but Godfrey did; going on teasing about coming too."

"And then he said you were not to come?"

"As good as said it: he said he should be miserable, and that you knew it was a thing he would never have allowed."

Oswald whistled.

"Then he did not forbid you?"

"No: no more than that. I wonder if it would be wrong to go after all? I told him I was, so he thinks I am. There would be no harm in going: would there? See how bright it has turned out. I long to be off. How I do wish papa would give up his molly-coddling notions about me!"

"Hush, hush, Hu.: we mustn't forget of whom we are speaking."

Oswald felt so indignant, he thought it wiser to be silent, till turning to take the gun again, he said, "You must do as you think right about it. I had set my heart on our going together, and teaching you how to use it."

May came in then, and Hubert left the room, his uncle repeating as the door was closing, "Just do as you think right about it, Hu., you know."

"Do right about it," repeated the boy to himself, as he wandered out into the gardens, and then on into the park, where he spent the time playing with the little ones in and out among the trees, trying to think he had made up his mind according to common sense, when he said there was no use giving in to fancies; but he was still undecided when the dinner bell sounded.

As they moved from the table, Oswald said, "If you are coming, Hu., we will go in half-an-hour."

"Yes, uncle." But there was still that *if*.

The half-hour went by, and Oswald was standing in the hall, fastening something about his cap, his dog at his feet.

"Uncle, I am not coming: I think I had better not."

"Nonsense, Hu. Has your father spoken to you?"

"No: but I think I ought not," Hubert answered; seeing plainly that the owner of the gun had arrived at an opposite conclusion: rather it was that he had never thought his brother's fears worth considering.

"Then I must go alone: that's all it comes to."

And he walked out, and whistled to the dog, and went away down the park, angry, as Hubert well knew. He stood looking after him till he was out of sight, and then took his hat, and went to fulfil a promise to lend a book to the bailiff.

"It is too bad of uncle to turn upon me," he said, as he went down the steps.

Osbert ran after him, crying, "Hu., aren't you coming? It is football match. Don't you remember?"

Hubert told of his promise; but that if he could, he would join him later; and went on, feeling as if he cared for nothing.

"Certainly I never thought of what uncle would think of it. It is dull going alone. Well, I couldn't help it; and I am much more to be pitied than he is."

He tried to whistle then and forget. The park was so quiet and bright this autumn day, that even he could not but take note of the soft lights slanting through the half-bared trees, and the rich colouring of the later ones.

"It is a jolly day: one ought not to be so horribly cross," he said, running down a slope, and jumping across the boggy bit at the bottom. But he soon stopped, and seated himself on an old stump, between two thorn trees,—a pleasant resting-place in spring time, when the May blossoms were out. With his back against one of the twisted stems, he sat thinking; watching the birds, as they flew about him, enticed by the rich red store above his head. "Why wasn't it pleasanter to do what was right?" It was so hard to feel it was worth giving himself so much disappointment, to have lost his pleasure, and vexed uncle:

and what for? He presently settled with himself, as he sat there, trying to answer his own vexed questionings, why it was that right doing is called a narrow path: hedged in by commands, to break through them is to leave the path, and to leave the path is to turn one's back on heaven. Softer thoughts followed, as the tingling smart of his arm, where his energy had carried out his purpose with more violence than he had intended, brought other and tenderer reasons for obedience to his mind. "Good and faithful servant." Had he not acted to-day so as to have more right to his old hope to hear that spoken to himself? Then, with a flush of shame at the idea of claiming any approval for so small a self-denial, came the remembrance of a Bible lesson of some mornings before, on the words, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Shot after shot sounded up from the distant dells, and the boy hurried on, determined to make his sacrifice complete and give the rest of his holiday to his father.

He found Mr. Cox in, laid up with a bad cold; and so long did he extend his visit, that after bidding him farewell, and promising to come and read to him to-morrow, he was just in time to meet his uncle outside the garden gate, walking briskly, with two hares hanging by his side.

"Well met, Hu.," he called: "just relieve me of this weight, and take one into him."

They turned homewards together.

"What are your plans now?" Oswald asked as they reached the house. "I am going down to the stables for Hector. Will you come for a gallop?"

Hubert hesitated: it was just what he should like best, and he dreaded giving offence again; but then—

"No: I don't think I will to-day," he said, with a half-frightened look up at the face at his side. "Shall I take in your other hare for you?"

His uncle looked round at him sharply, and then merely

saying, "Very well: yes, take this in," they parted; he for the stables and Hubert for his father's study.

He might well think the remaining hours of his afternoon *slow*; but his father was content, and saw nothing of the longing looks with which his companion followed the quick trotting horse passing them, as they rolled quietly on between the hedgerows in the pony carriage. Oswald's nod and smile were lost upon his brother; but Hubert looked up and met it, and felt something of the content his father did for a little while, till they passed through the village on their return, and he was again half out of his seat, craning his neck to catch a sight of the game in the playing-field.

The little jobs in the study, afterwards, upon which Mr. Raymond kept him employed, were no more enlivening than the drive; for, listless still from the suffering of yesterday, his father was better pleased to rest in the arm-chair by the fire, his eyes wandering continually to the fresh brown face bending over the table, than to talk.

The October day closed in early, and Hubert threw himself down on the rug, saying, "It is too dark to see: shall I ring for the lamp or light the candles?"

"No: there is no hurry about it. You can finish it for me another time." So they sat silent, the boy's thoughts straying to O'Hara, who had watched and waited for the one bright spot in his day, till the curtains were drawn, shutting out the gloom and his hope of brightness together. Could Hubert have heard his loud lamenting, he would have felt he had no right to waste all his pity upon himself.

The stillness was broken at last, and Hubert heard his uncle's voice exclaiming, "Why, all in the dark, you idle people! Here, Hu., there is Osbert screaming all over the house after you to tell you the result of the match."

With thanks in his eyes, the boy sprang from his lounging place, meeting Oswald's look for a minute with a glad smile, thankful that his time of inaction was over. He gave his father his parting embrace, feeling half vexed with himself that he was so glad to leave him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOST BROTHER.

"I was a wandering sheep :
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
I would not be controll'd."

THE lime-tree walk in the churchyard had shed its scent and beauty with its leaves; only a few last lingerers hung to the interlacing twigs, and fluttered downwards at intervals, catching the sunset rays upon their yellow sides for the last time, as they went to join their companions on the well-trodden path. Mr. Raymond and his brother lingered there, in the fading light, enjoying the quiet and the soft notes still reaching them from the organ, where the village school-master was prolonging his voluntary indefinitely, though the afternoon congregation was some time dispersed. It was the first time that the elder brother had joined the second service since his sorrow had come to him, and the younger rejoiced in the success of his urging, as he saw the brightening the change had brought him, and heard him answer, with hopes for future Sundays, to the Rector's greeting in passing.

"But don't go and tire yourself out now. Shall we go?"

"No: turn once again. Those notes are sweet, and it is pleasant being in the air."

"Well, have an arm then." And so together they went the length of the path once more. "I suppose I have seen the last of my favourite limes, with leaves on their branches,

for a couple of years to come." And Oswald broke off a brown spray above his head. "How I longed for the sound of the rustling of these leaves in the scorching heat last May, off the China coast, and the humming of the bees among their flowers! Sundays are dreadful times for home-longings sometimes."

"Why, Oswald, I thought your ship was paradise."

"Paradise? Have I ever called her so? One may be as happy as,—well, as happy as I am there, and yet carry one's longings after something more like paradise, to crop up on a burning Sunday, after a sermon from our precious chaplain. How many a vision of this dear old church I have had, with you all praying in it!"

"You are going to take your spray there for a reminder for your next fit of home sickness? You remember Keat's lines :—

" 'Even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self.' "

"Ah, well, I think the trees in my case are more dear for the sake of those they wave over, than for that of our old temple."

As they turned again, and caught sight once more of the white cross, dimly seen in the darkening, Oswald became suddenly conscious how painfully his words must have touched his brother. He had not thought of the flickering shadows falling there; but upon the living form he had known to be passing every Sunday beneath them. Further remark, however, was avoided by the appearance of a figure rapidly approaching.

"That is Colonel Dennis, surely," Oswald said, as the new comer stepped over the stile and saluted them hastily.

The square red-curtained pew had been empty all day, causing many a surmise as to something wrong at the Grange, and frightening Hubert, on his little friend's account.

Now the Colonel's first quick question was, "Have you

seen my son?" It was too dark to see more than his figure; but the voice told of ill-suppressed agitation.

"Not since Friday night, when I was at the Grange after Hubert. Have you missed him?"

"Yes, yes: since yesterday, midday. We thought at first, being Saturday, he was off on a long walk, or with your boys. But he has not been in all night; and now I know not what to think. God have mercy on him and me! Where is your eldest son?"

"Maxwell? At Sandhurst. Why?" the father answered, astonished; while the uncle said, "No, no: it is Hu. he means. He is at our bailiff's cottage. Do you think he knows anything?"

"Yes. I'll go to him: he must know something."

"Let me fetch him," said Oswald; "though I doubt if he knows more than we do. Have you no idea where Dermot may have gone?"

"No: not the faintest. I have sent all round, and to the station; but not the faintest trace can we find. But I'll get at that boy, for I swear he knows."

"My son? What is it you suspect?"

But the Colonel was gone; while Oswald exclaimed, "What possesses the man? Hubert know! Has Dermot ran away, I wonder?"

"Oswald, what does he mean?" Mr. Raymond asked, in sudden terror. "Can the two have been planning any wild scheme? The boy has not been like himself of late."

"Nonsense, Newton. Don't go fancying Hu. has ran away. If that other boy has I am sure it is not a matter of much wonder, kept chained as he has been against his will. Our bird knows he may fly when the time has come. Let us walk down to the cottage."

And they set off; Mr. Raymond walking faster than he had done for months.

Hubert had made his way after service to the bailiff's side, and found him settled in an armchair, by the fire.

He looked up with a pleased smile to welcome his visitor, saying, "I have been looking out for your coming, sir, for my eyes are too weak to read."

Hubert was soon seated by him, and opened his book at once, before the waning light should quite have left the small windows. He chose the 10th of St. John; reading with a pleasant intonation and quiet voice, while the bailiff lay back and listened. The 28th verse was reached, and Hubert stopped.

"Uncle says that the word *none* would have been a better translation here than *no man*," he said, keeping his finger on the place; "and he says it makes such a good double,—says just the same thing, I mean, as the verses in the 8th of Romans."

"Which?" his companion asked. "It must be a pleasant thing to have Mr. Oswald teach you. He knows the Bible as I wish I did."

"That he does," said Hubert; and he turned to the chapter, and read the list of the *none* who shall separate the true sheep from the love of their Shepherd.

"True, true," said the bailiff. "Thank you for remembering that to tell me. The two sayings repeat the same most blessed truth,—'None shall pluck them out of My Father's hand,' 'nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from His love;' and just because His hand holds us. It would not be long else before many things would separate us from Him, if it depended on our hold. But, thanks to His mercy, 'none shall pluck them from My hand.'"

So the bailiff said, speaking half to himself, and the boy listened, and then finished his chapter, saying, as he closed his book, "It is a good thing I have learnt that by heart, for it is too dark now to see."

They sat in silence a few minutes, and then Hubert began. "Mr. Cox, if you say, or I mean if the Bible says, that nothing can separate a follower of Jesus Christ

from Him, it seems to me to take away *the* reason that would nearly force one, best of all, to do disagreeable things that are right : doesn't it ? ”

“ Your uncle never taught you that, sir, I am sure,” said Mr. Cox, looking round at the thoughtful face resting on the boy's hand.

“ No. But it does seem to me that if one were afraid of being lost every time one was going to do wrong, it would keep one from doing it.”

“ I am thankful enough our Lord loved us better than that, master Hubert, or a miserable fear-burdened life we should have of it. You see, as I think, it is like this as we have just been reading : the Shepherd we follow leads, and never drives ; and when a sheep is put by Him among His flock, and marked with the mark that shows He owns it (that is His blessed Spirit put within), all the old wishes to go away from Him are over : and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.”

“ But, Mr. Cox, they do do wrong still, and don't always care about following Him ; and that is what seems so strange to me : how much doing wrong would make a person not saved.”

The bailiff repeated, solemnly, “ ‘ *They* shall never perish,’ —the sheep of the Saviour's flock. Sheep don't change into anything but sheep, because they change their shepherd : and sheep are silly things at the best, and will go the wrong way oftentimes ; but their safety is in the change of shepherd they have made, and in the seal he stamps them with. If a man were to turn to, and sin with his heart in his sinning, it would only show himself that he had never been sealed as one of the good Shepherd's flock. Do you remember the mark of the seal His sheep bear, master Hubert ? ”

“ No,” said the boy. “ You said it was the Holy Spirit in their hearts.”

“ Yes : but what the blessed Spirit stamps there is the seal of the Lord, as St. Paul calls it. ‘ The Lord knoweth

them that are His,' and 'let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' It is just like the words you have read: 'I know them; they follow Me.' You, dear lad, and I are His. He watches over us, and guides us to the end of the journey. But then being His, if we take our own wilful ways, He will call us back: and be sure, master Hubert, I tell you the truth when I say that He will think no punishment too heavy for us to bring us back to following Him; and sometimes His chastening is terrible to bear. But, oh, who would do a thing to bring a look even of displeasure from that Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. It always must end as it did with the Apostle Peter: 'He went out and wept bitterly.'"

Hubert sat in very thoughtful silence; and nothing more was said, till a sudden loud rap upon the front door was heard, repeated again next moment still louder.

"Why, Mr. Cox, it is Colonel Dennis!" Hubert cried, springing back from the window, where he had been to reconnoitre. "What can he want?" Then with a sudden frightened thought of O'Hara, he rushed from the room.

He was nearly seized by the collar when the door was unfastened; for all the Colonel's hot Irish nature was on fire, and he had fanned the flame during his quick walk.

"Where is Dermot?" he asked, fiercely. "I will know: so speak out at once! I know no such scheme could have entered his head by himself, and he has changed ever since you came about the place!"

Hubert's dismayed exclamation of "Dermot! What do you mean?" was the best answer he could have given: it staggered the Colonel's hastily-formed fancy, and he repeated more quietly, "Yes: Dermot. Don't you know about him? I will hear if you do."

"I've not seen him since Friday night. What is it? Where is he?"

Hubert's bewildered expression could not have been feigned; and after a fixed look at him, the father, with his

last hope gone, sank down on the old bench beside the door, and hid his face in his hands. Hubert stood by, wondering and frightened; then asked, "Has he left home? Can I look for him anywhere?"

So asked again both his uncle and father, as they drew near; the latter greatly relieved at the sound of the voice within the cottage porch. They drew Colonel Dennis in, to sit by the kitchen fire, and tried to rouse him to hope and to exertion; but he had grown despairing, and was so averse to "publishing such disgrace," as he said, that he would not hear of advertising, nor of any of the plans the brothers suggested.

"Well, something must be done," said Oswald at length. "I'll ride out to Canworth to-night, and ask at the station there. He may have walked that distance to avoid recognition at our own."

"Never, without being seen," said the Colonel, hopelessly; and rose up, and turned to go.

"Uncle, ask him if I may go to Harry," Hubert said, pulling his uncle's sleeve.

"My poor little broken-hearted boy!" exclaimed the father, catching the sound of the name. "He will speak to no one." And with a vain attempt to keep his composure, he laid his head against the mantel-piece, and burst into tears. He knew, and Hubert could well guess, the cause which had driven Dermot from his home.

No one could see such grief unmoved: and Mr. Raymond laid his hand on his arm, and begged him to take heart, and not give up the boy for lost at once.

"Any sudden fit of anger will soon pass by, and then you will see him home again."

"Only," Oswald added, "we must do all we can to discover his whereabouts. I shall be at Canworth not long after ten, and if I hear anything, I'll come down at once."

The Colonel lifted his head then, and, with trembling voice, thanked them for their sympathy and offers of help;

and left them, to take his way through the dark to his miserable home.

Hubert, meanwhile, having got permission from his father, went off with it. Colonel Dennis had described O'Hara as heart-broken, and refusing to speak, and his visitor opened his door, expecting to see him in tears; but his prepared consolations, he found, were little needed. O'Hara was sitting nearly upright, and his words, coming fast and loud, showed Hubert that any refusal to speak was far from his present intention.

"Ah, here comes Hu.!" he cried. "Now we'll see what he thinks. Gerry will say that it is wrong of Dermot, and I declare it isn't: he had no choice. Was it any harm, Hu.: eh? Now, say you are on my side: do!"

"Hubert cannot say he thinks as you do, dear; for he knows it is a wrong thing to do what Dermot has done," Geraldine said, in her sad voice. Her eyes were heavy with watching; and the sympathizing hearty grasp which Hubert gave her hand nearly upset her composure. "Can you stay a little?" she said. "I am glad you are come. Do show Harry the rights of it! You must be elder brother to him now." Then after a moment's pause: "He had been greatly provoked. His father never understood him, and was far too hasty,—oh, yes, far too hasty with him! And Dermot was not — Oh, how will he" — Then breaking down, she turned and quickly left the room.

"Harry, you are not kind to Geraldine," Hubert said, decidedly, as the door closed. "You should try and comfort her, and not keep on fussing her to say Dermot was right. It is a great shame of him."

"You don't know what Dermot has had to bear. Just lay me flat, Hu.: I feel quite tired. If Gerry would only feel proud of what he has done, I wouldn't mind it so much."

Hubert unscrewed the couch, arranging him comfortably, and wheeled it nearer to the fire, feeling most elder-brother-like as he moved about, doing Dermot's work for him; and

he determined that to fill his place, as Geraldine seemed to expect he would, should be his special care. O'Hara tried in vain to work himself up to anger against him, for refusing to join him in his opinion of Dermot's praiseworthiness; but he was tired, as he said, and found it easier to give an account of the last few days' events, as seen and heard of from his couch.

"Now, don't you think he was quite right not to stand it any longer?" was the question, when the story was ended.

"No," said Hubert, stoutly: "quite wrong. I quite agree with you about its being hard to stand it; but Dermot should have stood it, sooner than do wrong to escape it. Men have been burnt before now, sooner than do wrong."

"Is it wrong to get free? What right had the Colonel to trample upon him? You call it wrong, and so does Gerry; but I say it is right. And who is to decide who has the best of it?"

Hubert spoke out indignant.

"The Bible decides it, Harry. It says, Honour your father, and obey your parents; and Dermot has disobeyed and dishonoured his. It is that habit you have of speaking of him, as 'the Colonel,' which makes you forget, I think, who he is."

There was a silence then, while the child lay thinking; then speaking slowly, and without the pettish tone he had been using before, he said, "Hu., don't look shocked. But I must say I can't see why commands in a book should make us do what we don't like. You seem to think that if a thing is in the Bible, that is all that need be said about it."

"And that is all that need be said. Of course we are bound to obey it."

"But if we don't choose?"

"Harry!"

"Don't call out 'Harry' like that at me," the child said,

turning restlessly. "I tell you I don't understand about it, or what makes you so different from us. You looked horrified when you found me reading 'Sinbad' on Sunday, and you say it's wrong; and then you won't dig me up ferns on Sunday, because that is wrong: and everything seems wrong or right."

"So everything is," Hubert chimed in with.

"But Dermot said you might just as well have got me the ferns. And who can decide which is right?"

"Anyone can, if they read the Bible," Hubert said. "It is just like this: if you and I were drawing straight lines, we might each think our own lines straight, and fight over whose was the straightest; but if we got a foot rule, we should know in a minute."

"You think the Bible is like the foot rule. But I say, Hu., how do you know that it is? Why mayn't it too be wrong as well as right?"

"God wrote it, Harry; and He must be right."

Again O'Hara stayed silent; then the soft wistful eyes were fixed on Hubert's face, and he said, hesitatingly, "I know you think that ought to be enough for me; but I must just say this,—How do you know He wrote it? and how do you know He is anywhere? I know you will be angry with me. The only time the Colonel ever was, was when I said something like this, and then he slapped my hand with a ruler. But I can't help thinking it: 'and, Hu., I never had anyone to tell me about these sort of things since we lost mamma; and now I lie and think, and wish I could understand.'" Hubert made no answer; and the boy, looking at his grave face, said, "Ah, I see you are angry with me too. Well, don't let us talk about it then. It is not much matter after all, I suppose, what a boy like me thinks."

But, notwithstanding his careless tone, his eyes were full of tears, as he turned his head away.

"Harry, I was thinking how to answer you. It is all the

consequence in the world what we think ; for it depends upon that what becomes of one after one dies."

"Yes : I know that is what you think, and that is what makes you so particular. Mrs. Wibmer says if I get into passions I shan't go to heaven ; and if one must die, I should like to go there. If you were to die, should you go there, Hu.?"

Hubert coloured up to his hair ; but answered, steadily, "Yes."

"Why do you get so red, Hu. ? and how do you know that you shall?"

"I wish uncle were here to talk to you," Hubert answered, confused.

"I don't : he is a man. How do you know it : eh?"

"It is written in the Bible, Harry. It says there that God gave His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life : that is how I know," said Hubert, with still glowing cheeks.

The boy lay looking at him, and said, after some minutes, "I wish I knew what you mean. And if you know you shall go there, it can't be that which makes you so fussy about right and wrong. How I wish one might just live on and never change, and so be able to do just what one likes : don't you?"

"You wouldn't like to go on lying here for hundreds of years, Harry."

Hubert had spoken before he thought. The subject of O'Hara's helplessness had never been mentioned before between them. Now the child looked at him earnestly ; then crying, "No, no ! Why wasn't I made like you ?" threw himself across Hubert's knees in a passion of crying. Hubert rightly guessed that the long excitement during the day had as much to do with his tears as present grief ; and putting his arms round him, he let him have his cry out, only administering now and then a quiet "There, Harry, don't now."

Presently, when he had put him back upon the cushions, and he thought he had begun to doze, he was roused from his waking dream by the sudden question, "Hu., you are quite sure if one doesn't believe what is in the Bible, one can't go to heaven?"

"Quite sure."

"And what makes you sure? I didn't quite understand that bit of the Bible, you said, about God sending His Son."

"I am sure, because if you don't believe what God wrote in the Bible you won't believe in Jesus Christ, and without Him you can't be saved."

The door opened just then and tea was brought in, and Geraldine followed soon, so there was no opportunity for more talk. O'Hara was quite silent during the meal; and Mrs. Wibmer appeared soon after to carry him to bed, saying he had been awake half the previous night. The child submitted, too tired to resist, first drawing Hubert down to him saying low, "You shall be Dermot to me, now, and Hu. too; so come again, soon. And how much does a Bible cost?" Geraldine seeing them whispering, called the old woman out of the room on some pretext. "Haven't you got one?" Hubert asked.

O'Hara said "No:" adding, "I want one to read its rules about right and wrong things, to see whether I could obey them: are they all as hard do you think as the one about honouring fathers?"

Hubert shook his head. "It depends so much what they go against in one: that is not so very hard a one to me, you see. But the hardest thing is to get to care about"—then finding it hard to speak his thought, he stopped. "Here, I have my Bible in my pocket: you may keep it till you get one. I have another at home." He put it into his hand, and Geraldine returning, they said good night.

Oswald's late ride resulted in nothing, as did all future efforts to track the fugitive. Nothing was found to throw light upon the mystery: the boy was gone. And weeks

lengthened into months, and he was seen no more about the village nor on the moor.

May and Hubert did what they could to bring comfort to the two left behind in the rose-coloured room, but Geraldine drooped and grew graver than ever, and May mourned her inability to cheer her. "I quite miss her merry laugh, now; she seems to care for nothing but Harry and her piano!"

"She grieves after him, I know," Oswald said. "I saw her the other day at the Grange gate, looking down the road with so sad a face it made my heart ache to see her: one could see where her thoughts were. But it will be many a long year I fancy before he comes up that road to meet her,—at least, if he knows what he is about. His father has steeled himself against him, now that the first shock is past."

"That he has!" said May. "And Hubert says he put poor little O'Hara into such a passion, the other day, forbidding him to speak of him."

"That wretched boy has brought misery on them all," said her uncle; "and what he can be doing with himself I can't imagine!"

"He has made poor Geraldine wretched, for one," returned his niece. "I can't bear to see her looking so: she is growing quite old."

"How old is she, May?"

"Not much older than I am, and I am fifteen, you know."



CHAPTER IX.

FEEDING JEALOUSY.

"Who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more than king."—*Milton.*

"COME away home, 'Bert: you know you had better." Hubert was kneeling, fastening his bat into its case, and put out his hand as he spoke to catch his brother by his jacket. The two boys were nearly the last in the cricket-field; and the state of their flannels showed the consequence of November cricketing, more especially Hubert's: he was splashed with mud from shoulder to heel, his long legs working him more mischief in his running over the sloppy ground. "Come home and get clean," he said again, as Osbert paused a moment: "you don't know what a guy you are. Uncle was quite right not to come."

"I don't see that at all," said the other. "We've had a very good game, and shown Anderson that, at least, we can bowl as well as he, with all his grand Cheltenham airs."

A cry of "Are you coming?" sounded from the other side of the field, where a knot of boys was standing.

"Say no," said Hubert. "Your muddiness is reason enough."

"Who cares for that? They are every bit as bad," said Osbert, jerking away his jacket from the detaining hold.

The call was repeated, this time sounding nearer: two

lads had left their companions, and were running towards the brothers.

"No," called Hubert: "we are not! Say the same, 'Bert. It's Nevin and Rowlands. Do say no!"

"It's not *you* we are waiting for," one of the new comers said, as they drew near.

They were much older boys than the twin brothers; and Hubert stood up, answering the mocking tone with an angry glare, as the sentence was finished with, "You don't think we have so lost our heads as to expect the 'Park papa's pet' to taste our toddy? Go home to tea, there's a good boy, and tell how many runs you made."

"If I made no runs, I bowled you out, and Anderson too, the first go off," returned Hubert, fiercely. "Come, Osbert, let us go: it's getting dark."

"You aren't afraid of a scolding from your governess: are you, Raymond?" the other boy said. "If not, come along. We are safe for some fun: old Trollop has got a new chorus. Come, cut the big brother, and come on."

The double pressure of the grandeur of the use of the surname before Hubert, to whom it was generally given, and the taunt of the 'big brother,' was too much for Osbert's weak wavering, and he moved towards them; while Hubert made his last attempt: "Osbert, you know you oughtn't to go. He'll be ever so angry with you."

"How is he to know anything about it?" was the answer. "Hold your tongue, and leave me alone. There'll be no fuss after me if I'm half-an-hour late. I'm not the 'Park papa's pet,' thank goodness."

The two big boys stood laughing, crying, "That's right, Raymond: don't give in to him. He's no older than you; though he does presume so on his inches. Let's be off, and leave him to drink his tea with the little ones. Hot brandy toddy for me this cold evening, and a good song too."

Hubert, struggling with his anger, turned from them, saying, "Osbert, you know what you are nearly safe to be

in for. It is more babyish, to my mind, to be disobedient, and go and muddle yourself with brandy, than to obey papa, and come away home, as you ought."

The home name had slipped out before he thought, and a shout of laughter greeted it; while Osbert, enraged at his brother's tone used to him before the companions, whose older independence he aped, sprang suddenly at him, as he stooped to pick up his bat, and brought his fist, with a ringing blow, upon the side of his face, sending him violently over, upon the trampled mud and grass.

"There, I hope that will teach you to preach about what I *ought* to me!" he cried.

By the time Hubert recovered his feet, he found himself alone; loud voices and laughter from the distance telling him that his downfall was no small joke among his late companions. He stood for a minute or two examining the extent of his coating of mud, and wiping his blue-and-white cap, of which the colours were difficult to distinguish.

"Well," he said, apostrophizing his clothing, "you will all have to go into the wash tub together now. I wonder what on earth is making 'Bert take up this song of my being 'pet'? He'll have to stop it: that I can tell him. I can't think what is putting him out so ever since uncle has been back."

He walked away then, feeling not a little dizzy and blinded. The mockery of the farmers' sons he cared little for, knowing himself enriched by the very things that excited it, and caring not the least for the delights to which they tempted Osbert; but it vexed him terribly that their persuasions should prevail with him where his failed, and that his jealous ill-temper should have grown to such a height as even to be shown before them.

"Now, what will you give me for my news?" Mr. Raymond asked, coming into the school-room, with an open letter in his hand, and his face saying plainly that his news was worth paying for.

He was on his way to the dining-room, and the children were round the tea table, in the comfortable lighted room. There was a general move to welcome the unusual visitor, and May left her tea-pot to give him the only thing she had got for him, she said, unless he would take a cup of tea.

"Not just before dinner: no. Your kiss is worth my news, my May," he said, with his hand on her shoulder. "Don't disturb yourself, Miss Sturt: I won't sit down."

"I can guess your news before you say it, papa," said Minnie, looking up from her bread and butter. "I know by the thin paper."

"Maude is coming back!" cried both May and Hubert in a breath; the girl's look of delight equalling her father's.

"Yes: on the nineteenth," he said.

"What has made her change?" asked Hubert, when the general outcry was over. "I thought she was to stay a month in Paris on her way home."

"Yes; but her aunt has changed her plans. Why, my dear boy, what have you done to yourself?"

"Oh, it's nothing, papa," Hubert said, wriggling his head away from under the hand which pressed it backwards, bringing the swollen cheek and eye into the light.

"Nothing!" his father said. "You will be black and blue by to-morrow. Miss Sturt, I do beg that when these sort of accidents occur you would see to the boys using hot water."

"We were wanting him to have some the minute he came up," said both governess and sister in chorus; "but he would only say 'bosh,'" added May.

"Well, what's the good of making a fuss about a hit?" said the boy, reddening, and succeeding at last in getting his head down.

"A very rude way of receiving kind offers, Hu.," said his father: "to use slang to a lady."

"Oh, I didn't say it to Miss Sturt: it was only to May."

"I hope you like that inference," said his father; while

the girl answered, with her good-tempered smile, "Oh, Hu. knows I'm not too ladyfied yet to mind his talk. You had better not try it on Maude, though," she added, laughing.

"No. Rub up your manners, all of you, now," said their father, looking round the full tea table. And Hubert hoped his disfigurement was forgotten; but the satisfied survey the father's eye was making ended again upon him, as he sat between his sister and his brother's empty chair. "How was that done, my son? Was it a blow from a bat?" And again the hand was on his head.

"No: it wasn't," Hubert said, colouring again, drawing his head away. "Never mind about it."

Mr. Raymond looked at him a minute, and asked, "Where is your brother?"

"I wish you would speak to him, please, Mr. Raymond," the governess began, seizing an opportunity not to be lost. "I told him I should have to ask you about it. He is so constantly in late for tea on Saturdays. It keeps the things about most inconveniently."

"Is he out now, Hubert?" his father asked, sharply.

"I'll go and see if he is changing his things," said the boy, glad of any excuse to escape.

"Let the table be cleared without waiting for him, Miss Sturt, if you please; and let him know it was by my desire. And see to that poor boy's head: will you? He should use a sponge and really hot water for a good half-hour."

"Very well, papa: I'll tell him," said May, as her father turned from the door, with a "Good night, my little ones;" while May added, "I hope Hu. will like the prescription. He will think that will be too dear to pay for papa's news."

"He'll mind most if uncle comes in and finds him making 'such a fuss about trifles,'" Godfrey said, imitating the tone, smile, and shake of the head not seldom bestowed on himself, in his transition state from nursery child to boy.

To avoid any such discovery, May and her hot water were ordered off, by her indignant patient, to her own room.

"I'm not going to have 'Bert come in and find me at such coddling, so I'll get my books and come up there."

He was still drowsily conning over his lessons with one eye, and the sight of that half obscured by steam, when there was a knock at the door, and his uncle's voice asking, "Can I come in?"

"There, you are caught after all!" cried May; while her brother tossed away sponge and towel, looking up anxiously, suspecting the questioning that was coming.

He was not mistaken: Osbert was still out, and his uncle was bent on a voyage of discovery.

"Mr. Prescott has been dining with us this evening," he said, "and tells us he heard him speaking to some other lads, just as he was leaving the Rectory gate. They were under the hedge; and he caught the words, 'Won't he tell of you to the Captain.' Knowing my village title, he listened for more, and was astonished to hear Osbert's voice answer."

"What did he say?" asked Hubert.

"Nothing worth repeating," said his uncle: "only what revealed the cause of your swollen cheek, and that you were not in high favour just then."

"Stupid little owl! Why couldn't he hold his tongue? He is in for it now," Hubert muttered; while his uncle asked, "You couldn't get him to come home with you? Your father is so put out."

"No," said the boy, shortly. "Oh, what an endless plague there will be with him about this!" And he got up, saying, "I wish, with all my heart, I had gone with you this afternoon, or been with Harry; but then I get abused for not playing."

"And get something worse than abuse when you do, poor Hu.!" said his sister; while Oswald said, "But now where was Osbert going that you tried to stop?" Then seeing the boy look doubtful. "Now, out with it; for I ought to be gone."

"He was going to old cobbler Trollop's; but he didn't say, nor did any of them, what they were going to do after. I don't suppose he's there now: he is most likely gone home with one of the others."

So saying, Hubert gathered up his books under his arm, and went downstairs.

"Now, then, to catch the little wretch," said Oswald, rising; while May said, "What a funny fellow Hu. is! If I were a boy now, I should just want to give him a good beating, to teach him to keep his hands off me for the future."

"No doubt you would hit terribly hard, dear," said her uncle, with a smile. "At the same time, a blow on the cheek might recall some words which would save 'Bert from your fists."

"Perhaps it is that that makes Hu. want to keep him from being found out," she said.

"That is more than I can say. But boys don't like turning informers. Now I must go."

It was when tea was brought into the drawing-room that Hubert was sent for to the study, where he had to stand a lecture on having failed to report his brother's disobedience, and an examination on the subject of a ragged song book, lying on the table. To the first he listened without reply, answering the second by a denial of any knowledge of the book, or its contents.

With a sigh of relief, Mr. Raymond turned round, and threw the book upon the fire; his brother, who had been standing by, listening, aiding in its destruction by thrusting it deep among the glowing embers.

"A mass of viler rubbish never did I see," said Mr. Raymond. "And that is what Osbert has been learning to sing from; and he has been learning, moreover, I fear, to drink brandy and smoke; at least both tobacco and brandy were the scents he brought in with him this evening." The absence of any look of surprise on Hubert's face made him

add, "And you knew this? Hubert, I call this very wrong! Your duty is to look after your brother. Why didn't you bring him home with you?"

"Papa, really you should remember that he is as old as I am. I have no power over him. I said all I could."

"And got well paid for that," his father said. "Well, I mean you to have power over him now, as I have told him; at least so far as this. The punishment he has received this evening will keep him, no doubt, from open disobedience for a time. But I have told him that, as I have not at present the slightest trust in him, he is to go nowhere beyond the park palings for a month, without you, unless, of course, your uncle or tutor take him. I am determined to have all village intercourse broken off. You understand: you must look after him, and do your best to help him to take an interest in better things,—keep him with you."

A low whistle was audible to Hubert, near the door through which his uncle was leaving the room, and he looked up at his father aghast, saying, earnestly, "Oh, don't have that plan, papa! It will be such an awful plague to be always together. Do say some way else but that!"

"And who is to choose, I should like to know?" his father asked, sharply; stopping Hubert when he began again, "But really, papa," with, "Just hush that this moment, sir. I won't be argued with by my own sons; and I will have them obey me. Surely Osbert is as much your brother, and as well worth taking thought for, as O'Hara Dennis. No: not another word."

Hubert could not remember the time when his father had called him "sir," and feeling not a little indignant, and terribly aggrieved, he stood silent as Mr. Raymond passed him and went to rejoin his guest in the drawing-room.

The prayer bell brought them together again, and Hubert knew himself received back into favour when he was drawn within his father's arm and tender inquiries made after his head. The clergyman already had the Bible open, and his

hurried answer that it was nearly right again, was followed by an earnest wish that bruises could be received without outward mark, or that Maude's letter had not drawn his father to the school-room on that particular evening.

As he was leaving the drawing-room, his tutor followed him outside the door.

"Hubert," he said, "I have no wish to interfere between you, but I think you will be wise not to begin any discussion with Osbert this evening on what has happened. I have sent him up to bed, for he is in no state to do his work; and if you wish to avoid quarrelling don't begin talking: that is my advice to you."

The boy looked at him greatly astonished: he had never had so many words addressed to him at once, on any subject not relating to his studies, by his present adviser; and that he should have taken the trouble of leaving his seat and crossing the room to speak them, surprised him still more.

"Of course he thinks I told of him?" he said, with questioning eyes: "I knew he would," he added, in a troubled voice.

"I don't suppose he *thinks* at all: he has taken stuff too strong for him for one thing, and anger at punishment is not helpful to calm judgment about anything. He is very bitter and angry just now, more so indeed than I have ever seen him. He will be able to see things clearer to-morrow: but I thought a hint might save fuel being added to the bad feeling. I have noticed that you avoid quarrelling, and take a good deal sooner than begin, so I thought it worth while warning you: you would find it difficult, I think, to stand his present humour."

"Thank you very much, sir," Hubert said, wondering at the thought taken for him. "I won't talk: perhaps he is asleep."

The tutor stood silently a minute; then, with his brows bent, and his thoughts evidently given no longer to his boy-listener, he said low, "Yes, a brother harder to be won

than a strong city ; their contentions like the bars of a castle : then woe to the day when the first stones of such walls are laid, and cursed the jealousy out of which such bars are forged."

He clenched his hands as he spoke, and a look as of intense pain passed over his face. Hubert had seen the same look before, though always quickly checked ; and since his uncle's words to him, in the library, he had pondered often over what the hidden wound could be, the pain of which seemed at times more than the stern man could bear.

"Mr. Maynard," he said, to break the silence, "I think that must have been said about men's quarrels, not boys : we never find it very hard to make up."

The tutor started.

"What was it I was saying?" then in his ordinary voice and manner, "Yes : but beware of first beginnings. If it is as hard to win back an offended brother as to take a strong city, Solomon speaks truth also when he says that 'he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.' You be strong that better way, and bear with your brother in silence to-night. Now it is past your hour for bed, don't be wasting time."

As he was turning back to the room, Oswald came out meeting him with, "I was just coming to find you, Mr. Maynard. Have we 'Bingham's Christian Antiquities?' Mr. Prescott wants it."

"Yes. Fetch it : will you, Hubert ? Dark green cloth, lowest shelf, near the window."

The library was nearly in darkness, only the flicker of the firelight upon the warm coloured furniture and long lines of books ; but recollection of their familiar backs made it easy for Hubert to find the volume wanted. Crossing to the fire to see if his selection was the right one, a low sob, followed by another caught his ear, and peering round the room, he asked, "Who is there ?" A shoot of flame showed

him a figure crouched in the arm-chair; and, heedless of the tutor's warning, he turned, saying, gently, "'Bert, don't go on crying any more, come away up to bed. I am so sorry."

"Get away, you sneak!" was all the answer he got.

"Don't, 'Bert: indeed I've done nothing to get you caught. Come away up to bed: Mr. Maynard won't be pleased if he finds you here."

"What do I care! Get off with you: a sneaking cry-baby, who can't bear a hit without going whining to its papa."

Half-sobs interrupted the snarling words, and Hubert had it on the tip of his tongue to retort the epithet; but checking himself, he said, "Osbert, you shall believe me when I tell you I've not said one word about anything you have done till they questioned me, and then only where you were gone."

"I don't believe you, then. How did they know I had knocked you over else? I've a good mind to do it again. The darling pet has been revenged now; but I'll pay you back finely some day: wont I! I know my game."

And he looked up glaring with his glistening eyes upon his brother, out of the shaded depth of the big chair, till Hubert expected him to spring tiger-like upon him. Remembering the tutor's words he turned away, saying, as quietly as he could, "Well, don't let us talk any more about it to-night. I'll show you I am right to-morrow. You come up to bed now."

He reached the door, but then could hardly resist the temptation to turn and give some answer to the volley of words which were following him. The thought that they would never have been spoken, but for that visit to the cobbler's, kept him silent, though his heart beat fast with indignation, and the tears rose to his eyes; for, being spoken, they showed such feeling towards himself as startled him.

He was stopped at the half open door by his uncle.

"Silence, Osbert, this moment," he cried, in a voice that

would have roused his sailors. Standing before him with his hand on Hubert's shoulder, the boy's determined stare could not be held to for long, and his look fell before the grave eyes fixed on his. "Now what is the meaning of your slanging your brother like this? For one tenth of the words I have just heard, any other fellow would have knocked you down. If he is forbearing enough to stand it for himself, I will not for him, so leave the room at once. Come, quick : march at once."

"And what right have you to be ordering me? I'll say what I like."

"Oh, how dare you, Osbert!" his brother cried; while his uncle, stooping, took him by the shoulders, and, carrying him outside the door, dropped him upon the mat, and shut him out.

"Did you find the book?" he asked, coming back. "Don't fret about this. The boy is mad just now: he will be too ashamed to hold up his head to-morrow."

"I don't know that," said Hubert uneasily. "I can't tell what has put this notion of my being favourite so strongly into his mind: he talks to the boys, and tells them home things, and they take it up and make him ten times worse. Why, we have always laughed, and May too, about papa fussing about me; and they have always said what a lot of trouble it saved them. I am sure 'Bert hates nothing in life so much as sitting in the study and reading the *Times* to him, or some awful article in the *Quarterly*, on 'Atoms,' or the 'Solar Spectrum.' I know I'd change willingly often enough. But I can't bear to hear him talk at me like this: he and I used to be quite jolly together; and to fancy I've got him punished to revenge myself for a hit! What are we to do all this dreadful month?"

"It is about the most idiotic arrangement I ever heard of," cried Oswald. The words were out before he thought, and he hardly made them better by adding, "I can only suppose your father thinks Osbert is blind to his partiality

for you, or he would hardly have gone the very best way to feed any jealousy there is."

"And really he is jealous?" said Hubert, laying his head on the marble, as they stood before the fire. "Oh, dear, I never thought about it before."

A heavy sigh followed his words; and his uncle said, "Come, never mind about it: I'll take him in tow for a few days; and as to jealousy, why, in a year or two all cause will be gone, and he can have your father all to himself, and the *Times*, and the 'Solar Spectrum,' too," he added, laughing. "Cheer up, old boy: it will be all right again by and by. He evidently is not jealous of *my* fondness: eh?" and he drew him towards him.

"I don't know, I'm sure," Hubert answered, more brightly, pressing close to him; "nor do I care, so long as he doesn't take that from me."

"Never, Hubert, while it is strengthened daily by growing respect for a life, as I see it lived now, governed by law. Your fear of the impossibility of bearing the check of some 'behind reason,' as you said, was needless: wasn't it?"

"What do you mean, uncle?" Hubert asked; a glow of the greatest pleasure he had ever felt deepening the colour in his cheeks.

"Don't you remember your dread of being constantly checked in what you wished to do, if you allowed yourself to own a new rule?"

The boy nodded. It was not likely, he thought, that day would ever be forgotten; then said, shyly, "You see it makes it so much worse to bear afterwards, if one doesn't."

"Yes. 'The love of Christ constraineth us:' isn't that it? And the more we grow in faith, realizing His knowledge of our actions, so much the more pain it is to us to feel we have proved false to Him. But now give me the book. Mr. Prescott will think his messengers after Bingham are like Ahaziah's after Elijah. We shall be having Mr. Maynard down next."

"How fond he is of Proverbs, uncle! It is the only book of the Bible he ever quotes."

"So he used to be: he was always stirring us up with, 'Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.'"

"Well, I'll go and shut mine now," said Hubert.

"Forget what I said about your father's orders, Hu.," his uncle said, as they parted at the drawing-room door. "Of course he has his own reasons for them."

Hubert could not help thinking that though he had, it did not follow they were wise ones.



CHAPTER X.

PLOTTING.

“And crossed the lot myself had craved,
To set me higher.”

THERE was a wild wind out over the park when Hubert looked out in the dark, about a week after his eldest sister's return to her home. It was a raw disagreeable morning; the first glimmer of light over the grey sky, covered with flying clouds, giving little promise of good for later hours. He turned to dress quickly, and get down to the library fire: he might have it all to himself till seven o'clock. It was with a grave look that he glanced at the other bed, to make sure that his brother was sleeping still. His constant wish now was to shorten any time that they could be alone together; for the days since the Saturday's cricketing had brought nothing less than he had feared,—numberless causes to add to the pain and sorrow of that evening. Outwardly they were at peace again, and had shaken hands in their uncle's presence; but the limp fingers laid in his grasp only repeated to him what he was already sure of,—that the owner of them was not dreaming of forgiveness.

His father's orders had not troubled him much as yet; for the weather had been too bad to tempt anyone, without special call, abroad. There was no chance of such means of escape to-day, for the scudding clouds had plainly no

intention of stopping to rain ; and the boy sighed as he left the room, and ran downstairs to the library. It was not to find it empty, however : his tutor was sitting, reading, beside the newly-lighted fire.

"What makes you so early this morning, Hubert?" he asked, raising his eyes gravely from his book, not over pleased with the interruption.

"I had something I wanted to finish before reading. I didn't know you were here, sir. I can take a candle to the attic, and do it there as well."

"Nay, don't go away : there is room here for both. If you have employment, we shall not disturb each other. I like the energy that can make early rising possible."

"Oh, if I go to bed in a hurry, I always wake early next morning."

"And what is the cause of your hurry? What have you there?"

"It is something I am making for Harry," Hubert said, as he drew in his chair to the table ; and then they sat on in silence.

The employment which made the early rising necessary was the working out a device of his own, which he had planned soon after his last talk with O'Hara, on the Sunday evening after Dermot ran away. He had grown greatly interested in carrying out his idea, and was hastening now to get it finished, in hopes of a visit to the Grange this afternoon. He had had no time alone with his little friend for long now ; for Geraldine's studies seemed to occupy her less, and she was more with them, and they could not talk with the same freedom when she was by. His visits also had, to himself, too often the sense of stolen pleasures for them to be extended to any length. To-day, however, Geraldine was to spend the evening at the Park, to make acquaintance with Maude ; and Hubert had laid his plans for his own enjoyment.

There was not much more time before the hour would

strike when Mr. Maynard came and stood beside him, as he bent, brush in hand, over a large sheet of paper. It was divided into columns, coloured variously ; a twining wreath of ivy forming a border, while a space at the head and foot of each column was filled with a device in bright colour.

"What is your work, Hubert? It seems interesting, and looks a formidable undertaking. Is it another historical chart? I thought you were satisfied with your last."

It was no use trying to conceal it now, though it was not just what Hubert would have thought of showing to his tutor ; and he said, "No : not exactly. It is a sort of chart, I am making for Harry, of all the different religions in the world."

"Eh, what?" And Mr. Maynard drew up his chair, and pulled the paper towards him. "Your little friend goes into large subjects for such a child. But tell me what this means. This middle gold-edged line is Christianity, of course."

"No : I didn't mean Christianity alone ; for, you see, it begins at 4,004. It is the true religion. At the top, here, I have put an altar, with a lamb upon it, as the sign."

"Ah, I see, you have put the symbols heading each. Very nice!"

"And in the middle, here, is to be a gold cross ; and at the end,—I was not quite sure what I should put,—I think this crown it shall be."

Mr. Maynard looked so interested, that Hubert was tempted on in his explanation.

"I see : you put the ideas of paradise at the end of each. Very good ! This unfortunate Mussulman hardly looks over happy ; and you have given him so few hours. I didn't know they intended to smoke there."

Hubert laughed.

"I could not make him look like a Turk without his pipe ; and there was not room for any more figures. I have poked in six."

"True: you could hardly get in twenty-two. And look here: you have put in the wrong date. 622 is the year of the Hegira. The Mohametans date from that, not from 570."

"To be sure! I ought to have known that. I looked for the date of Mahomet's birth."

So they talked on, criticising and explaining, and had got upon the subject of Parsees and Ghebres, when the clock gave its warning.

"You are in a mess here. I must show you about this presently," Mr. Maynard said, as he rose. "See: the time is up!"

Hubert moved, with his eye on the clock, and his hand still on his chart, longing to defend his plans.

"I wish it weren't time," he said, reluctantly beginning to arrange his things together. "Now I shan't have done this."

"How much is there to do?"

"Not much: only this drawing and these lines to colour."

"Would half-an-hour do it?" the tutor asked. "If so, I will excuse you your grammar repetition this morning."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Maynard!" the boy cried, delighted.

Never had any such grant been made him before.

"It is a useful and sensible employment, and time is well spent upon it; so I have no hesitation in allowing you to use your half-hour so. Your work lately has merited any indulgence it is right to give; and quite as much so your general conduct. Now lay it aside for the present, and fetch your books. There are two or three things we must set right here before you show it to little Dennis. Let me have it a minute."

He took it from the boy's hand, and stood examining it, while Hubert cleared the table, and ran off for his Bible, his face showing his pleasure. Praise was so rarely given in that room. As he left it, his uncle came in.

"How capitally that boy does work! Thoroughly neat and straight this is."

Oswald was looking over the tutor's shoulder.

"Yes : this is very well done, and shows much sense and perseverance. There has been no little pains taken here."

"How is it, Mr. Maynard, that, with so much more quickness about him, Hubert is always behind his brother in general work? I was surprised to find it so."

"I don't know; but so it is. One thing is, I think, that, though Hubert has more natural quick wit, Osbert loves exactitude and thoroughness more."

"I should think Hubert *had* more natural wit," said Oswald, laughing.

"Still, give me Osbert for a pupil before him, any day," said the tutor. "If we had two of him, we should never have a word of trouble from morning till night. It pleases him to do as he is bid, in this room, I mean."

"And the other it does not."

"Bidding is just what he cannot bear; and *must*, I believe, is the word he hates most in the dictionary. He has given me just about as much trouble as I could stand, with his self-will, and his insolent self-assertion. But I must say that he has a rein of some sort over himself lately; and there is something singularly lovable—attractive, I mean—in him, in his palpable efforts after the (to him) very foreign virtues of submissiveness and humility."

It was the first time that Oswald and his once friend had had anything like conversation together since their parting in that room, three months ago; and he felt thankful for whatever cause was keeping the children away, and for the subject of mutual interest, which could not touch upon old times.

"I think he is trying to do right," he answered, quietly, not venturing on stronger praise, though far warmer words first sprang to his lips; but he would not risk speaking them, to check, perhaps, the slowly-given approval.

The tutor laid down the paper, saying, "Mr. Prescott's sermon, two Sundays ago, on Jacob and Esau, on the words, 'And the boys grew,' brought the thought of these

two to my mind, as he was remarking on the dissimilarity of character in brothers brought up under the same training. I never met twins so unlike, and yet the same influences round them, till just lately. And then Mr. Raymond's preference was natural, and has hardly caused, though it has brought out, Hubert's peculiarities."

"And now, I fear, is bringing out Osbert's," said Oswald. "No. If Jacob and Esau are their counterparts in dissimilarity, they are so in nothing else. Hubert will never be a Jacob in his baseness, nor Osbert an Esau in his boldness."

"You are evidently certain beforehand which is the Jacob," Mr. Maynard said, with a smile, as the door opened, and May and one of the subjects of their discussion came in.

His face took its natural set as he said, "Hubert, here is ten minutes of the time for the Bible lesson gone. I will have this wretched habit cured. Write out the eighth proposition from memory before you come to breakfast, and tell Osbert to do the same."

"This is uncle's time, not yours," the boy answered, fiercely; "and he shall set me punishments for wasting it, if he wants to."

"A very Jacob-like speech, truly," said the tutor, as he turned towards Oswald, a sneer on his lip. "What do you say, Mr. Raymond?"

"That I have nothing to do with any such arrangements. We had better waste no more of our time now," Oswald said, gravely. "Where is Osbert?"

"It is all his fault we are late," said May: "he wouldn't give Hu. up his Bible."

And her uncle, seeing there had been some disturbance, called to her to begin her repetition; while Hubert looked after the tutor, as he was leaving the room, and said, "I am sorry I was late, Mr. Maynard; but I could hardly help it."

"Well, I hope Euclid may help you to learn *quite* to help it for next time."

Oswald, thinking a very strong rein must be needed to

keep disrespect in check at all times in that room, heard Hubert's lesson, and sent him to do his writing at once, saying, "You were not given time to explain."

"What are you doing to my chart, uncle?" Hubert asked, as he looked round at the end of the half-hour, his job ended, and saw Oswald, pencil in hand, at work upon his paper.

He stood and looked over him, reading the words he was printing lightly in old English letters round the crown, at the foot of the middle column.

"That, I think, is the concentrated thought of paradise for us, Hu.," he said, as he rose. "Now make haste, and be ready this time. It is only in pencil: you can rub it out, if you don't like it."

The words Hubert read were, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." He did not rub them out; but printed them in in red and black.

The latter half of the morning proved peaceful in the quiet room. And when the study books were finally put aside, "Here, Hubert," Mr. Maynard said, "if you are not wanting to go, I can show you about this now."

They went together to a side table, where a pile of books, a box of compasses, ruler, brushes, and a large sheet of cardboard were spread in inviting array; but Hubert looked from them in dismay to his precious chart, marked over in all directions with corrections.

"Oh, Mr. Maynard!"

"Yes: I have revised your work for you. But it will be a messed affair when all these things are put right, so we had better do another; and I have a better plan, I think. It will look more symmetrical in form, arranged like this. Give me that bit of paper, and I'll show you." The tempting-looking sheet of cardboard reconciled the boy to the destruction of his three weeks' work; and hardly less, the interest the tutor was taking in his plan, and the kindness which led him to provide him with his own materials. "When did you want this finished, did you say?"

"This afternoon I wanted it," Hubert said. "Papa says I may have tea at the Grange. But it will be better to wait, and take him so much better a one another day."

"Very well, then: I will help you do a correct and fuller one. There are many things I must show you; and you should get your uncle's help as artist for your figures. What made you add these words here?" Hubert coloured and hesitated. "Is that the meaning of this crown, think you?"

"The crown means,—doesn't it?"—the boy said, shyly, "that the winners are crowned when the—when it is all done."

"Winners in what?" the tutor asked, looking up at him, as he stood beside him.

"In whatever one is trying for, I suppose," Hubert answered, with the sudden boldness with which the searching look in his tutor's eyes not seldom inspired him.

"That must depend upon whether the object is crown-worthy, surely," was the next embarrassing remark.

But Hubert mustered courage again, and answered, "Of course one wouldn't hope to win this sort of crown at all, unless one tried for what it could be given for."

"And that is the object worth it: eh?" the tutor asked, with his pencil on the words, "be like Him."

"Yes: of course," was the earnest answer. "But uncle put those words there: I only coloured them."

"Oh, that was it," Mr. Maynard said, looking down, and beginning to measure distances on the clean sheet. "Then, perhaps, your idea in drawing the crown was different, or do you agree with him?"

Hubert wished his questioner would be silent. He had no desire to speak of such things with him, being half afraid of him, and altogether shy. Mr. Maynard's sarcastic tone was dreaded by him far more than his cane had ever been; and he was not quite certain if he were not scorning his uncle's suggestion now.

"Uncle says that is the best thought of paradise," he

said, slowly. "And if one hopes for that as the best thing then, one can't help trying for it now."

"You think that, really, or is that parrotting of 'uncle's' words?" the tutor asked, looking up so sharply, that Hubert's reply had a touch of indignation in its tone.

"I think if it is copying anyone to say so, it is copying St. John."

"Eh? What does he say?"

"'And he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure,'" Hubert repeated, with eyes fixed on the tutor's, who said, "Then that is your purpose, and that," pointing again to the red and black letters, "your hoped-for crown? I want to know," he said, as the boy was silent.

"Yes: it is, Mr. Maynard," Hubert answered then, the tears rising to his eyes, and colour to his cheeks, in painful shyness.

"Forgive me," his companion said: "I have no right to question you. But it is a strange phenomenon to me, and one of which I had begun to doubt the existence. I trust you may gain both your object and crown. Now let us start this. Will you have the border the same size, or wider?"

After its long months of silence, the grand piano, at the end of the drawing-room, was doing duty again. Maude was a good musician, and Geraldine sat entranced, as her rich notes joined with those of the instrument. They had been interrupted by visitors, and now May and the two elder boys, who had been summoned to be presented, stood and talked with their guest in the window; while Maude returned to the music stool, and resumed her singing. "Oh, where are ye, bright happy days; ye gay and radiant hours?" she sang; and Hubert was soon leaning over the piano, listening.

"Maude, you sing that as if you meant it," he said, looking into her face. "Which are the happy days you are singing to: the French or the old English?"

She looked a moment, uncertain what to answer; and rising suddenly, and catching his head between her hands,

"You tell me which were the happiest, and then I'll tell you which I was singing to." She threw herself down as she spoke into a low chair, in the window, and Hubert made a good guess to which days her thoughts were winging their way. That wistful look over the park trees was given to something remembered, which he had never seen.

She was a tall handsome girl; in feature, resembling her father, and with the same bright waving hair. She had been his special pride; and while her mother lived, their eldest born was the most cherished by him among their children. But she had given him time, during her months of absence, to put another in her place, and she had made no effort to resume it. She brought her thoughts back now with a start, to say to her brother, "Hu., you must come and ride with me this afternoon: it is the only thing to do such a day as this."

The proposal raised an instant stir upon the balcony outside, where Oswald was busy upon some straying creepers, hammer and nails in hand. First, Geraldine began with the earnest reminder, "You remember, Hubert, Harry has been counting on this afternoon to have you."

"He must wait, then," Osbert broke in with; "for I am going to the moor, and I won't be put off again, Hu."

"Well, I never, young man!" exclaimed Maude. "And why are you to drag Hu. after you?"

Osbert had forgotten that his sister had arrived after the beginning of his month of disgrace; and now he stammered in a vain search for some blind for her, and was relieved to hear his uncle sending Hubert to unfasten some straying shoots above their heads, and to see Maude turn to watch his ascent of the ladder Oswald was holding for him. He stood thinking, watching them too, and only half listening to the merry talk and laughter going on, as Hubert, reaching after the last remaining monthly roses, pelted the group below with them.

"You won't find things as good as those at the top of

your rope ladders at sea, Hu.!" Maude cried, flinging back his missile. "You had better be persuaded, and make up your mind in favour of a quiet life."

"Quiet life indeed! Nothing but sea and rope ladders for me; and you see, Maude, if I don't find the good things at the top, I shall get them at the bottom. There is my best thing," Hubert answered, with a merry glance at his uncle.

Oswald bowed low.

"Do you expect to sail all your life under my command?"

"I must say, for my part, I think it will be quite wrong of Hubert to go to sea at all," Geraldine said. "I believe it is just because of you, Mr. Raymond, he can't bear not being with you. Poor Harry will cry himself blind."

There was the sound of horse's hoofs round the corner of the house, and next minute on the drive below them.

"Oswald, are you mad? Don't you see Hubert's dangerous position?" his brother called, with fear hurrying his words, as he checked his horse.

"There is no danger: I am holding the ladder."

"Hubert, come down at once,—at once, I say! I wonder at you, Oswald. The least over-balancing, and he might have been killed on the spot."

"I assure you, Newton, there was no danger: the ladder was at a good incline, and I was holding it. It looks worse, of course, to you down there."

"Well, I forbid your going up again, Hubert. You have given me a complete shock."

"All right, papa. You won't be able to see me running up and down the rope ladders at sea, that is one comfort for you. What are you trampling my toes to pieces for, uncle: eh? What have I said?"

Oswald made a face at him; and Mr. Raymond called out, telling Hubert that if he had finished his work for the day, he might as well come and ride with him.

Already trebly engaged, the boy demurred.

"You go, 'Bert: do now; and then I shall be free to go to Harry, and can ride with Maude first! I really can't come with you to-day."

Turning from him, with a look of malignant anger, Osbert leaned over to his father.

"Didn't you say, papa, that Hubert was to walk with me? He just shirks, and won't come; and it's a great shame, on a Wednesday, when we can be out long, and the first dry day for weeks."

"'Bert, don't talk like that," said his brother. "There is no earthly reason why we need go to the moor to-day particularly. Stay with us, or go and ride with papa."

Mr. Raymond, meanwhile, puzzled at the working of his own plan, suggested, "Why not both come and ride with me? that will put it all straight."

"But I don't want to just now," Hubert expostulated. "I want to help uncle here first; and then Maude wants me to ride with her: she is going to call on Mrs. Duff, and can't go alone; and May is staying with Geraldine; and then Harry wants me."

"In great requisition, it seems, to-day," his father said, laughing.

"The truth is, he is being rapidly ruined: such a bump of vanity is being developed," Maude said, pulling his hair.

"Don't, Maude, you hurt. I am sure, if you don't want me, I don't want to come; but if you do, I like to."

"The case truly stated, my son. Well, I will make a sacrifice, and yield the prize to prior claimants for to-day. 'Bert, my boy, you come with me. Run along and get your pony, and be quick, for it is cold waiting about."

"Come, Osbert, don't look so sour over it," his uncle said, as he passed him. "The month will soon be over now; and then you can start fair."

"There's another half nearly to go yet, and no chance of a fair start now with *him*."

There was a moody hopelessness in the tone that, mingled

with the ill-tempered scowl, made Hubert say, earnestly, "Indeed I would come, 'Bert, if it weren't for Harry."

And their uncle said, decidedly, "No, Hu.: the punishment was given to Osbert, not to you, and on him the inconvenience of it must fall; and surely a ride is not such a terrible affliction. There, run along, and don't keep your father, and pray bring a more good-tempered face home with you!"

With great faith in the good results of exercise, Oswald turned to hammering up his creepers again.

"Hu.," he said, when they were all at last in order, "didn't you know why I trod on your toe just now?"

"I know you nearly crushed it flat."

"Well, I say, I wish you would be more careful what you say before your father about dangers at sea. You were going on about that burning of the *Helvetia* last night till he was in the last state of misery. He is growing more and more sensitive about your going, and hates to have it mentioned. It will be a dreadful wrench to him whenever it comes."

"It is just what every father has to bear, I suppose," Hubert said. "After all it is only saying good-bye once, and then the job is over."

"For you, yes; but for him—— Much you know about it. If you don't take care, we shall be having him refusing his consent altogether."

Hubert flushed crimson.

"He can't do that, uncle! You know he has promised; and nothing on earth shall ever move me from going. I will never give him his promise back; and take it, he can't."

A violent hit with the hammer came at the end of his words.

"There, don't excite yourself," his uncle answered, laughing at him. "At least, you can be thoughtful to save him extra apprehension, and avoid the subject of rope ladders and fires at sea." Oswald stood a moment in

thought, with one foot on the window-sill, then added, "And couldn't you manage somehow gradually to let him become a little less used to having you so much with him? It will help him to miss you less."

"I am not so very much with him," said Hubert, looking surprised. "I am always afraid of displeasing him about it as it is. Why, he told me, not so very long ago, that I was getting tired of him: that was when I was with Harry so much. Why, you scolded me yourself about it."

"Aye, I remember: yes, you were rather too outrageous then; a thing of that sort must be done gradually. Any sudden change vexes, of course. But you are in the study every evening now."

"Yes: I thought that was the best time. I learn some of my lessons there. I am sure I often wish I could be in three places at once, or rather four now, for Mr. Maynard has actually asked me to come to the library in the evening, if I like, when I want to work at my chart; and I shall hate not to, when he is so kind about helping me."

His uncle could not help smiling at the unconscious way he bore testimony to his own pleasantness. He looked at the grave face, a few minutes before so bright, and, to banish the troubling subject, said, stepping indoors, "It is true, Hu., what Maude says: you are getting to be thought too precious. We must make haste and turn you into a middy's berth, to find out there you are not all gold, or your vanity will become unbearable."

"I don't think vanity comes till one begins to value oneself as gold. It isn't much matter what others count you at," Hubert said, following his uncle through the window.

"But don't you think the value in which one is held soon becomes one's own valuation of oneself?" Oswald said.

"No, I don't," Hubert answered, thoughtfully. "Not unless one shuts one's eyes, and only opens one's ears."

"How is that? Shuts your eyes to your own defects, do you mean?"

"Yes. And besides that, there is something else to keep them open for." His uncle looked a "What?" "What you wrote on my chart this morning: what one is to be like one day," the boy answered, turning away. "Now I shall go and see whether Maude wants her ride still; and I shall stop at the Grange, and she can come that bit home alone."

"No wonder his head is kept from turning, if he keeps that standard before open eyes," his uncle said to himself. "But I wish he were well away. I shall not know which to pity most—him, or his father—next year, if he cares for him one half as fondly as I find myself doing. Poor Newton! He will break his heart after him. If only home might have remained as it was for another year!"

He would have wished so still more ardently, could he have overheard the conversation between the two riders, who were already far away over the moor.

Mr. Raymond had expected no particular enlivenment to his ride from the unusual companionship; and for the first part of it he found none. They rode on silent through the deep lanes, where the mud was deep under the horses' feet, and the leaves, lying thick, gave up their dying smell. Only short remarks were interchanged till the mud was left behind, and the horses started off for a canter over the moor; then, as the ground grew rougher, and the pace changed to a walk, Osbert drew nearer to his father, and began, "Papa, I wanted to talk to you."

Mr. Raymond looked down, answering, with a smile, "Well, you could hardly have a better opportunity, I think." Then, seeing purpose in the boy's face, he added, "Whatever you want to say, I am ready to listen; always tell me anything you like."

"I am afraid you will be angry, papa. But, please, don't say No at once. If you think about it, I am almost sure you will think it a good plan. I have been thinking of it for some time now."

"And pray what is it?" asked his father. "How long can one thought live in your head at once?"

He spoke half joking, not able to connect serious thought with that round face and curly head. Within the head passed the reflection, "He would never have said that to Hubert;" but the outspoken answer was, "I can think, papa; and what I want is, that you would let me go to sea."

"You are taking leave of your senses, 'Bert. You know very well that that has been the promise to your brother since his babyhood. And I should never dream of sending two of my sons into one profession, least of all into the Navy. I am only grieved it was ever thought of for Hubert."

That was just about the answer Osbert had expected, so no outcry followed; but he went on: "You don't dislike one of us going into it though, do you? You would not mind Godfrey, or Jack?"

"No, perhaps not; for your uncle has very good interest, and could push them on. No: it would be a good thing for Godfrey, perhaps. The little man is too delicate, he must be the surpliced gentleman, I think."

Osbert, smiling at the thought, answered, "Then really it is only Hubert's going you mind; so I don't see why I might not go."

"Because the going has been promised to your brother, as I have said. And though, of course, he may very possibly change his mind, and give up all idea of it, as you are the same age, and I will not have the matter discussed till the latest limit, you would then be too old yourself; for I could not allow such a decision to be made in a hurry, so you must banish the thought from your mind. It has not been there very long, I fancy. I think I can easily guess what first gave rise to it, and I am not sorry for the opportunity of a little talk with you on the subject."

This was hardly what Osbert had bargained for; but the ground was too broken to allow of the only diversion in his power, and he had to receive his sermon on the evils of

ungentlemanly tastes, low companionship, and the weakness in resisting temptations which led to the desire to escape from them.

"The only way, my son, is, to break from it all. Leave those who will teach you nothing but evil, and find the pleasure you may and will in your rightful companions; and now and for ever give up all thoughts of going to sea. It is what nine boys out of every ten dream of."

"Will I give it up?" thought Osbert. "No: never, till I go, and see him left to wish himself me."

He meditated how to resume the subject. At last he asked, "Papa, what would make you more willing to part with Godfrey to go to sea than Hubert?"

The question startled Mr. Raymond. He was vexed to think he had made an admission arguing favouritism, and he called the boy's attention to a number of magpies rising suddenly before them. But Osbert's "Eh, papa?" repeated the question. Again his father paused, stroking his moustache before he made answer; but Osbert waited patiently, determined not to lose his answer to a question he was surprised at having been able to ask. When given, it was prefaced by a sigh.

"You can see, Osbert, that while equal sorrow at parting might be felt in both cases, there would be more to lose in the one than in the other. Godfrey is yet only a nursery child. Hubert's value I know; Godfrey's is in prospect."

Mr. Raymond thought he had got over the difficulty; but Osbert's purpose was not yet answered.

"Well, papa, if you say me instead of Godfrey. You would more willingly see me go than him: wouldn't you?"

"That is hardly a question proper for you to ask, my son," Mr. Raymond answered, with displeasure in his tone. "Come, we have passed the rocks. Turn to the right, and we will take Horsham lane, and get as far as the village."

The gallop was over, the moor exchanged once more for

the closeness between the high hedges, and Osbert, always noted for persistence, began again.

"Papa, I didn't mean anything rude when I asked you just now about Hu. and myself. I was just thinking this about my going to sea."

"Bless the boy! The British fleet seems running in your head. What is it now?"

"Why this, papa: I must talk to you now, while I have the chance. I know very well, so I needn't have asked, that it would be much worse to you to lose Hu. than me."

There was a little pause, which Mr. Raymond filled up.

"Don't fancy, 'Bert, I love you less. But he is the image of your precious mother; it would seem like losing her over again."

Osbert let the pause grow longer for a few minutes, believing of his father's words what he chose.

"Well, papa, you see, Hu. only wants to go to sea, I believe, just to be near uncle. Geraldine was saying so only this afternoon. And he would soon get tired of it, being away from you, and be wretched; for he is ever so fond of you."

"I don't need you to tell me that, 'Bert: dear boy!"

"And then he would have to part from O'Hara too. And I feel certain in a month he would have had enough of it. He would not mind dreadfully giving it up, now that he is so much to you and Harry. He would be happy, of course, with you and him. Then I could go instead, and you would have him still; I should be away from the village too then."

"Have you spoken to him, or he to you on the subject?" asked his father, with roused attention. "Have you any ground for believing that his feeling about his future is at all changing, or is it only your wish for yourself that makes you fancy this?"

"No: he hasn't said anything about it, of course," said Osbert. "It would never come into his head to dream of

changing of himself. He would think it a disgrace, and uncle wouldn't let him."

"Wouldn't let him?"

"No: I should think not. Why, just think what a shindy he would kick up: there would be no end of a row."

"Don't speak in that way of your uncle, Osbert. If Hubert has said nothing to you about it, it must be sheer fancy on your part that his feelings have changed."

"That is not what I meant, papa. The thing I know is, that he will mind leaving home now twenty times more than he would last year. He would have gone in a minute then, and never thought about it; now, just see how different it is."

"How so?" said his father, with unconcealed interest.

And Osbert, satisfied to have got his ear and grave attention at last, went on; and the subject lasted till they neared their own village.

"Then you will speak to him about it, papa?"

"I will consider what you have said, but only on the condition that you do not breathe a word to your brother on the subject. If I do say anything it will be in my own way, and at my own time; and don't be setting your heart upon any change for yourself. Make up your mind to be obedient and good, and then, whatever happens, you will be happy and contented. Now, let the matter drop; let us warm ourselves with a gallop."

Mr. Raymond was alarmed at himself at finding what strength of ardent hopes his son's words had raised in his own mind. The gallop warmed him, but did not banish them, and Osbert might have been well satisfied at the result of his work by the time they dismounted, in the early dusk, at the hall door.

Meanwhile, Hubert, in happy unconsciousness of the cloud raised that afternoon above the horizon, seeming to him so clear, sat with his little friend, whose sparkling eyes and laughing mouth told his enjoyment. The days seemed

long to him often now in his still life, for even the little change of the daily drive round the garden paths, or in the lanes, was cut off from him now by the autumn weather. To have his friend all to himself for a whole evening was wonderful happiness.

It was getting late, when games and books were put aside, and Hubert drew in his chair between the fire and the couch, and O'Hara nestled up close to him with a satisfied "Now we are thoroughly comfortable! We haven't had such a famous long time together since that night after poor old Dermot went away. How long ago that seems now, and yet I have been all that time getting up to the half of your Bible. I hope you don't want it back just yet. Did you remember I have had it ever since?"

"Dear, no: keep it as long as you like. I told you I had another."

"We have one in the book-case," Gerry says, "but it is too big for me to hold. It is so interesting, Hu.; but I've only reached the Psalms yet; and I don't get through them as fast as the stories; only I have made up my mind to go right through."

"You needn't hurry, Harry, really. When you have reached the end, too, you will just have to turn to the beginning and read it all through again."

"Shall I. I remember it all very well. Which story do you like the best?"

"Why uncle is twenty-six, and he has read it every day of his life since he could read; and if he lives to be ninety he'll do the same, I know."

"But what should he read it so often for?" O'Hara asked. "He must nearly know it by heart: even all the *musts* and *must nots*. You were quite right, Hu., about one finding plenty about what is right and wrong in it."

"Yes: but there are other things in it besides that," said Hubert. "Things that are nice to see printed and be able to read; all sorts of things."

"Are there?" the child said, watching his friends face; the look in it, called up by happy memories, making him add, "I suppose I haven't come to them yet. What are they?"

"Have you read the writing on the fly-leaf of my Bible?" Hubert asked.

"I saw there was something there, and meant to read it, but forgot," O'Hara said, feeling under his pillow for the book. "Read it now, you are nearer the light."

"Uncle wrote it in it when he gave me the Bible, long ago," Hubert said, opening the cover, and he read. "'These Scriptures are as a temple where God dwells; and into which He brings those who love Him.'

"'If thou art merry, here are airs;
If melancholy, here are prayers;
If studious, here are those things writ
Which may deserve thy ablest wit;
If hungry, here is food divine;
If thirsty, nectar, heavenly wine.'

"'Oh, Lord Jesus, I ask from Thee no other reward, no other happiness, no other joy than this: that I may rightly understand Thy words, inspired by Thy Holy Spirit.'

"That is what he thinks of the Bible. Some old fellow, Peter Heylin, wrote the verses, and John Scotus the rest."

O'Hara took the book from him and read the words through again to himself. Then handing it back, he said, "I wonder if I shall ever think as they did. I don't understand their saying that any more than I do all David says in the Psalms about loving God. Do you remember how he says, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee'? I think the words sound so nice. And then he ends with, 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'" Hubert felt puzzled how to answer, and O'Hara went on, "Do you think it was because David was good that he loved God so much? I have been trying to get more good these last few days. I haven't been snappish once with Mrs. Wibmer

for four days; and I did call the Colonel '*Father*' twice yesterday, to try and obey about honouring. But I don't find I love God one bit better. And only think, Hu., how dreadful it would be to have to die and go to Him without loving Him!"

The small head was lifted from its resting-place to Hubert's shoulder, and he laid his cheek down upon the soft hair, saying, "I wish I knew better how to tell you about it all. I wish uncle would come and talk to you. One thing you see is, that you must have a reason for loving God before you can."

"Well, but that seems a strange thing to me," O'Hara answered, "when the minute I saw you nearly I loved you. That must just be the reason of the difference, I suppose. I saw you, and I can't see God."

"Look here, Harry, will you mind doing what I ask you? I know you don't like skipping, but would you mind leaving the rest of the old Testament till afterwards,—it is mostly the prophets, and they are awfully difficult to understand,—and begin here, at St. Matthew? Halloa! I am afraid here they are: that is uncle's step."

As he spoke there was a hand on the lock of the door, and the well-known, full, cheery voice saying as it opened, "Here, I have brought you back your stolen princess."

The boys started apart, and Hubert to his feet as Geraldine came in. She was wrapped in a scarlet cloak, a small fur cap low upon her forehead, a bright colour was in her cheeks, latterly always pale, and the little brother, looking up at her as she hastened to his side, exclaimed, "Oh, really, Gerry, how beautiful you look!" Oswald and Hubert both laughed, the boy saying, "Really, Harry, you tell plain truths," while the young man nodded to the child, who added no little to his sister's confusion by adding, "There, Mr. Raymond thinks so too!"

"Well, how have you enjoyed your evening, you silly little goose?" Geraldine said, laughing, too, as she knelt

down by him. "I am so glad you were here, Hubert, for I was able to enjoy myself in peace."

"You look as if you had, Gerry," O'Hara said.

"It has been the next happiest time I have ever spent after the picnic day," she said; "only then there was"—— she stopped, a shade clouding her bright face.

And Oswald said, "If you find our drawing-room a pleasant place, you must come again, that is all; and bring more music next time."

She smiled up at him, saying, "Only too willingly. But while you have Miss Raymond to sing and play to you, you can hardly want anyone else; though, I think, Mr. Raymond liked Miss Yorke's songs better than her's."

"Why, were they there?" Hubert asked.

"Yes; at least the eldest of them," his uncle answered, shortly. "She knew Miss Dennis before."

"Well, I never! Fancy papa having people to dinner again!"

"I am glad she was there," said Geraldine. "She has always been so kind to us."

"And so she always is to us," said Hubert. "But uncle doesn't like her. I don't know why."

"No: I don't," Oswald said, standing up, "nor ever shall; and some day you'll say the same, if I'm not mistaken."

He spoke so hotly, that Hubert looked surprised; and Geraldine said, "Why, you talked to her, Mr. Raymond, as if you were great friends."

"Oh, and so we are, of course," Oswald said, trying to laugh off the strength of his former words. "You wouldn't have one tell a lady to her face, I don't like you."

"It is only Harry who would do that," laughed Hubert. "You must have been quite a party at dinner. That is the reason you have made yourself such a swell."

"Yes: you look so nice, Mr. Raymond," said O'Hara; while his sister looked up, saying, merrily, "Now you are coming in for your turn, you see."

"But really," said the child, "I do think you look very nice. I haven't seen anyone in a tail coat since we were at Malta, and then we always had numbers of people coming in the evening. And your little white bow too is so pretty. I never see anything now but people in buttoned-up dark things."

"Poor little man!" said Oswald. "It is a dreary life for you. I should like to get you to the Park. Would Colonel Dennis let you come?"

O'Hara's eyes sparkled, and Hubert cried, "Oh, do try and manage it!"

"Yes: I will talk to Colonel Dennis. I might drive you in the pony carriage, if we could arrange for your lying down anyway. I'll see about it. But now, Hu., we are keeping the carriage: say good night and come."

"When uncle says he will see about it, it always gets done," was Hubert's encouraging accompaniment to his farewell.



CHAPTER XI.

PARTING.

“All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are, to a wise man, ports and happy havens.”—*Richard III.*

IT was the established custom at Raymond Park that the Christmas dinner should be a compromise between the usual late and early one; and that at the uncomfortable hour of six, the whole family should meet round the long table. For the sake of the children and servants, everyone had submitted to it with a good will in the happy days that were gone; but Mr. Raymond gave a despairing sigh when Maude reminded him not to fix his ride too late.

“My dear, is this necessary? I really do not feel equal to such a gathering to-day. Can you not let us have things as usual?”

They were just home from church; and the effort of attendance at the Service, in the midst of his children assembled together round him for the first time, had been nearly more than he could bear.

“So I was asking,” his brother said. “Go in and rest, Newton.”

“But, papa, the children have set their hearts on it!” said his daughter. “They have been talking of late dinner and turkey and plum-pudding for a week past.”

“Oh, very well, then, if it must be. I won’t make their day drearier than it is.” And, with a weary sigh, he shut himself into his study.

"It would have been infinitely wiser, Maude, to have had no dinner at all than to have let this be," Oswald said, hastily.

They had been standing in the hall, and Maude was already on her way upstairs, but stopped as her uncle spoke.

"Oswald, how can you be so ridiculous! People must eat, happy or unhappy. You would be the last one, I know, to like fasting. Don't you go moping, there's a good fellow; but do help to keep the children alive! I thought you were the one who despised association of feeling with times and seasons."

"I despise nothing which gives additional pain to my brother, Maude, however much I may feel all days alike in the one grief to myself. However, it must be as it is now, and I am thankful we have the Dennis' here. It will help to make it look as little like old times as may be."

"Oh, we shall be all right," she said, "if you will only exert yourself to talk, and not be so horribly dumpy, as you were at breakfast. Mr. Maynard himself couldn't beat you."

So saying, she went upstairs, and Oswald stood where she left him—before the large hall fire—a full quarter of an hour, without moving. His eldest nephew found him there; and Sandhurst politics turned his thoughts into another channel, from the gloomy one they had followed all the morning, exciting, thereby, Maude's displeasure and Hubert's wonder.

In the library, O'Hara lay on the broad leather sofa, with Geraldine sitting beside him. He had found Hubert was right, and that uncle's "I will see about it" carried with it good promise of success. Colonel Dennis had been thankful to accept the invitation for his children, the griefs in their own home making any prospect of Christmas brightness a vain hope. He was gone himself from the gloomy Grange, and O'Hara and his sister were doing their best to forget it in the delightful change to the brightness of the Park. Their presence was felt there as no little

relief by the elders of the party, when the lengthened dining table was surrounded ; little Helen's face of supreme content, as she sat in her high chair at her father's left hand, reconciling him in no small degree to what he shrank from so painfully, as Maude took her seat opposite him.

"You are pleased to have dinner with papa, my little love?" he said, stroking her head. "Hu., my boy, why have you changed your seat?"

"Because Max always sits by you on Christmas day, and I by uncle," answered the boy ; while Oswald wished, for the twentieth time that day, that the constantly-repeated *always* could be a forgotten word. He turned quickly, making some joking rejoinder with forced merriment, and his niece had no cause to call him to account for silence during the remainder of the meal.

It was a pretty sight, when, at last, it was brought to a close, to see each of the younger children drawn within the father's arm, as the carefully-prepared Christmas hymn was repeated. Oswald had earnestly hoped that the *always*, with reference to that custom, would have been forgotten, with no mother's care to remind of it ; but the good governess had thought to save pain at the omission by superintending the learning ; and Mr. Raymond felt bound to submit to the infliction, though his white worn face, as he sat with closed eyes listening, told how gladly he would have changed the heat and bustle of the full room for the quiet of his study.

"How many more am I to have?" he asked, with a smile, as Godfrey finished. "Hu., dear boy, it is your turn."

"We are not going to say any this time," he answered, quickly. "We ought to stop now we are nearly thirteen."

"Well, if you won't, uncle Oswald must !" cried Minnie ; while Godfrey remarked sententiously, "He always does it because he is really old, while you and Osbert and Max and May are afraid of being thought young."

"Indeed, I think Hu. is right," said Oswald, laughing.

"And I must say, though not through any fear of being thought young, that I think papa has had quite enough."

But the children clamoured for only uncle's, at least, if the others did not say theirs. Geraldine and O'Hara joined in petitioning, and Mr. Raymond's "You had better remember one and content them," settled the question.

"Not that I can say a Christmas carol of any sort," Oswald said. "I am never a good hand at remembering verses, unless I drummed them in long since. However, I will say you the only thing I have in my head just now." And he repeated,—

" "Oh Thou by long experience tried,
Near Whom no grief can long abide,—
My Lord, with Thee, in sweet content,
I pass my years of banishment !

" "All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impressed with sacred love ;
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee,—
In heaven, or earth, or on the sea.

" "To me remains, nor place, nor time :
My country is in every clime.
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

" "While place we seek and place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none ;
But with my God to guide my way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

" "Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were to me a fearful lot.
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.' "

There was a sad solemnity in the way he spoke the five verses, and a little pause followed, broken by Geraldine saying, gently, "That is a nice hymn for a sailor, Mr. Raymond."

"Yes, if one's feelings and the words could always match," he answered, low.

Hubert, sitting the other side of him, overheard, and looked up at him inquiringly ; while his brother was saying, "That is nicely expressed, Oswald. Whose is it? I think I have heard you repeat it before."

And Mr. Maynard asked at the same moment, "Who may the writer of that be, who had attained to so stoical a state of indifference?"

"It is Cowper's: a translation from Madame Guion," Oswald answered ; while Hubert remembered suddenly the occasion of its former repetition, and slipped his hand into his uncle's under the table, a feeling of alarm making him connect the verses and Oswald's strange depression since the morning. His fingers were closed upon in a tight grasp, as his uncle, turning to the tutor, said, "To accuse her of indifference or stoicism, when she is rejoicing that she carries her true home with her in all changes, is like accusing a man of indifference who tells you he is so content in his ship that he is careless where he sails ; such satisfaction, when attained, appears to me the secret of contentment, that is not indifference."

A soft voice behind them, near the fire, said, "It is like David,—isn't it, Mr. Oswald?—in that psalm where he says, 'I am continually with Thee: there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee.'"

"Harry, dear, those words seem to run in your head," said his sister.

And Oswald, looking round at him, where he lay, with his thoughtful eyes fixed upon him, said, "Quite true, O'Hara. If one felt with David in that, discontent and grumbling would be at an end. But now, Newton, had you not better move, and go and be quiet? Do you want any message taken to Cox? I am just going down to give him my Christmas wishes, as he was not at church."

There was a general move ; and, under cover of the bustle, Oswald said, "You come with me, Hu. : I want you."

They were soon out in the dark frosty night ; and after

having waited vainly for some time for his companion to speak, Hubert began: "Uncle, what is the matter? I am sure something has happened."

"Matter enough, Hu.! It is all very well saying what one is taught; but it is beyond me just now to say it is equal joy to go or stay, with any truth."

"Uncle, you don't mean"——, Hubert gasped; while Oswald went on: "Yes: I have received my orders to join this morning, and a frantic letter from my poor old captain, who hates nothing as he does a hurry."

"Oh, uncle, uncle: I got a panic when you said those verses! You said them that Christmas when you had to go away on New Year's Day."

"And they were true enough for me then; but not now." Oswald said, stamping as he walked. "I had not meant to tell you to-day; but my manhood is not equal, I find, to going on without talking to someone."

"Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?" Hubert moaned. "I am thankful, at least, that you don't go and say you are glad, as I thought you would. You said before that you were longing to get away."

Oswald made no answer, but walked on more quickly than before; and the boy feeling too miserable to speak, they said no more till the white gate was reached. If either wanted sympathy, they found it in the small sitting-room, where the bailiff sat alone over his fire, with his large Bible open at the evening lessons; and an hour passed before they thought of saying Good night.

"I take it most kindly of you, Mr. Oswald, coming down like this," he said, as they shook hands; "though, indeed, you could hardly have brought news I should have been more glad not to hear. You did not say what day we were to lose you."

Hubert heard the answer with a cry of dismay.

"The day after to-morrow."

"Poor dear lad!" said the little man, taking his hand as

he dropt Oswald's. "You are most to be pitied of us all. But cheer up : our Father in heaven orders all these sorrows for us, to teach us to look forward with more longing to His home, where no sorrow can follow us in."

"True enough, Cox. But when one is young, one kicks against them more, I believe ; and it is harder to submit 'to thwarting.'" Oswald said, vehemently, taking up his cap.

"I believe you, sir ; and for that very reason they must come, then. Do you remember the talk you gave us at the Farm, the first night there : how you were reminding us of the yoke our Lord lays on His people ? When He puts it on early, what is it for but just to break us into His service when we are wildest, like young colts ? You remember how Jeremiah tells us that Ephraim laments : 'Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, turn Thou me, and I shall be turned ; for Thou art the Lord, my God' ? If He left us without letting us feel His hand ordering us here and there, shouldn't we soon forget altogether that we have a Master to rule us ? But you know all this as well as I can tell you, Mr. Oswald. But I see it is going hard with you now."

"Yes : talk away, Cox."

"You see, Mr. Oswald, one wants training just as much as a horse or a bullock needs breaking in. These troubles that we kick so against are just a collar put on our independence of spirit and self-will, till they are subdued ; and it can be said of us, as the prophet Hosea says of Ephraim, 'Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn.' *Loveth*, you see. Our Lord will have willing servants ; and they must be trained to obedience, till they say, as He did Himself, 'I delight to do Thy will, oh my God.' He loves while He trains. But no going against our own wills can seem pleasant, while the pressure is on, any more than the collar and rein can seem pleasant to the young creatures."

"Pleasant : no !" Oswald said, adding, "I would give anything I possess to stay at home a month longer."

"And, indeed," said the bailiff, "when I talk of trouble, I feel for myself too. I can't tell you how much I lose when you go. But God's will be done, I will say still."

"And I'll try to, Cox," the young man said. "I fear the love of my own will is a long way from being broken in yet ; and no obedience without a willing heart is true service to God."

"They are words I always read with great reverence, Mr. Oswald, but you remember it is written of our blessed Lord Himself, "He learned obedience by the thing that He suffered."

Oswald nodded, and stood thinking gravely a few minutes ; then shaking the bailiff's hand again, "Good night," he said. "I am glad I came down to you. I have been very wrong. Admiralty orders are, after all, God's orders to me. Thank you. I will be down some time to say Good-bye. You will find a Christmas present of some first-rate tobacco on the mantel-piece : I brought it from abroad. Come, Hu."

There were not many words exchanged on the way back ; but as they neared the house, Hubert was roused from his doleful meditations by the sound of his uncle's voice beginning again, as they walked leisurely up the slope,—

"O Thou by long experience tried !"

He went through to the end slowly, as if trying himself by the words ; then turned to his nephew, saying, "Hu., old boy, I believe my going will be nearly as bad for you as for me, though I have been selfishly thinking only of my own share in the matter. I fear for us two, it is equally divided sorrow to go and to stay."

Poor Hubert was by this time so nearly on the verge of tears, which he was struggling to keep back, that it was no use, after the first choking failure, attempting any reply, and his uncle said no more, only drawing his arm within his

own ; and so they went on together, till they reached home again, and were met with the announcement that tea was in the drawing-room, and "Master says that master Hubert is to take him a cup of coffee in the study."

It was a long time before he was released, and could join the others upstairs, where the sound of laughter and merry voices seemed to him a strange contrast to what he had just left, and his own tear-swollen eyes he felt were hardly fit to present in the brightly-lighted room ; but "uncle" was there, and in he went.

"Why, Hu., where have you been all this while? You look as though you had been attending a funeral!" Maude cried, on the end of a laugh, at some speech of O'Hara's.

"Oh, don't, Maude!" May said, in a shocked tone, as she passed to get his tea. "He has been with papa."

And Hubert did not volunteer any other reason for his looks, though he did overhear her words.

Oswald, looking up from a drawing board resting on his knee, called to him to keep his seat on the edge of O'Hara's couch. "Don't move, and I'll put you in : you are just right for my picture. You didn't say anything to your father of what we were talking of, did you?"

"No : not I," said the boy. "There was no use bothering him about it to-night. He says he won't come up. I was to say Good night for him."

Such a heavy sigh followed, that O'Hara, forgetting the advancing portrait, drew down the hand near his head, whispering, "What is the matter, dear old Hu.? You look as solemn as twenty judges."

"Oh, never mind me, Harry. Papa is so miserable, and it makes me so to see him. I'll tell you all the rest to-morrow," he said, looking up, as a voice behind his uncle exclaimed, "Why, you have hit Miss Dennis off to a 'T': she is twice as like as O'Hara is!"

"Get out, Max, you spy!" Oswald cried, turning up his board as the others crowded round him ; while Hubert,

drawing it out of his hands with a "Let me have a look, uncle," carried it off to the centre table, for the benefit of the lamp.

"You have made Harry's face too fat," he said, "but Geraldine is exactly right. He has given her just the right look in her eyes, hasn't he, Mr. Maynard?"

The tutor was looking over his shoulder. "More than he has in your's," he said. "You have made Hubert's mouth too grave, Mr. Raymond, and given the child a smirk."

"Oh, come, my unfortunate performance has fallen into the hands of the critics! Never mind, Hu., I will try Harry again for you to-morrow: you shan't have this one."

"But you could hardly have succeeded better with pencil than you have with Miss Dennis, both in face and in the whole figure," the tutor said, as he handed him back the board, with the faintest trace of a smile just moving the corners of his mouth.

Oswald saw it, and his brown cheek flushed for a moment as he turned to the piano where Maxwell and the girls were already beginning a glee, saying, "Yes: some faces are much easier to draw than others are: your's is."

The announcement made next morning fell like a thunder-clap among the happy party. "No wonder, poor Hu., that you were too glum to speak last night," O'Hara said, as Hubert sat on his bedside, the direful news just told. "I was wondering what made Mr. Oswald so solemn too. What shall we all do without him? Just to think of their sending for him now, when we all want him so much, and were so happy."

So the lament went through the house, from the servants in the kitchen to the nursery; only to the master, regret was tempered by a strong secret feeling of the relief that the absence of the naval element from Hubert's side would bring to him. There was more than enough to fill the last day, in trying in the few hours to wind up what would have

been spread over weeks ; but the last hour came in due course. The carriage was preparing in the stable-yard, and Oswald was changing his dress in his bedroom, while Hubert folded and laid in their places the things just taken off.

"Hu., look here : open that parcel. I had meant it for your birthday, but you must have it a few weeks earlier now. It will be something to remember me by, and," he added, looking over him as he unfastened the small parcel with eager fingers, "poor little Charley Donne, or rather, perhaps I should say, the teaching of his life and death. The watch is his," he went on, when the contents had been discovered, and the boy's exclamations of delight were over : "the chain I have added for you. His father insisted on my having the watch as a remembrance of Charley, when I ran down there last month ; he said his son had counted me his greatest friend. I assured him I could not wear it, as I could not give up the one your mother gave me. He said then that he had heard through his boy that my special nephew was going to sea, and might he have it? He had had it made on purpose for Charley, and should wish another sailor to have it. Look inside."

Hubert opened the back. Round the inner cover were engraved the words, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." "Was I right in saying I believed my nephew understood and tried to act in the remembrance of that?" Oswald asked.

Hubert's thoughts sped back to the morning when he had sat in the breakfast-room and heard the dead midshipman's story, and with all his heart he said, "Indeed I do try, uncle. If you had hunted all the world over you could not have found what I should have cared for more,—I don't mean than a gold watch and chain,—but than Charley Donne's."

"I quite understand ; I wouldn't have given it to you else. Don't show it to your father till I am gone, and then don't tell him all the story, or he will think you bound to

follow his fate." Hubert pocketed his treasure as Mr. Raymond came in.

"What have you ordered the carriage so early for, Oswald, my boy?" he said. "You will be nearly an hour too soon."

"We are going to drive to Canworth, Hu., and I. There is always such a stoppage there, and waste of time, and I may as well have company as long as I can."

"You will have that long lonely ride back, Hu."

"That is not much to pay for the drive out," the boy said. "Now give me your keys, uncle, and I will shut up."

"Do you go straight on board, that you are dressing now?" Mr. Raymond asked. "We shall miss you terribly, dear lad, after having had you home for so long."

"I hope you will, Newton," Oswald answered, looking round with a smile; he was not certain, however, how much the word *miss* might imply,—his face at the table and the sound of his boots about the house would be missed. He was vexed to feel now that the parting time had come how much of warmth had gone from between them.

"Well, you certainly are a fine looking fellow, and a brother to be proud of," Mr. Raymond said, looking the young lieutenant over, as he stood before him in his blue and gold. "Take care of yourself, dear boy, and come back again safe and sound. I daresay you won't much mind getting to work again."

"One hardly thinks of that, with all the goodbyes in prospect," Oswald answered gravely; while his nephew said, "Come down and show yourself to Harry, he wants so much to see you, and to see what I shall be like some day. Won't you be pleased when you have a son to be proud of like uncle, papa?" he said, laughing, his spirits wonderfully raised by the contents of his pocket. Mr. Raymond only shook his head, and saying he would send Foster up for the portmanteau, left the room.

"Now Hu," his uncle said, "my last piece of advice to you is this,—stop all these references to your future, for the

next few months entirely ; it is only keeping up a worried feeling in your father's mind. The thing is a settled affair, but I can see more plainly than ever that he would well nigh give his head that it were not. He was regularly angry with me about it yesterday, when I was giving him Sir William's address, and telling him when to write to him about your promised nomination."

"Uncle!" cried Hubert, startled, "fancy if papa should put it off too long, and I should miss after all!"

"Don't frighten yourself about that. I will take care to write to Sir William myself in good time, and with such friends in the service as you and I have, your father would never in common prudence lose the chance of seeing one son well provided for. Besides," he added, laughing, "I fancy I tied the knot which binds you to me a little tighter yesterday, and anyway the idea of your father gaining his own ends by a meanness is folly. He will see to your affairs for you, or tell you he won't. Trust me anyway for taking good care that I am not cheated out of having my boy with me one day ; but I lay my commands on you to let the matter rest till it must be raised, and do put Maude up to taking your place about him gradually : the more you go on like this the more you may. But there is May : coming in a minute, dear," he called. "Just find my railway rug, I have left it about somewhere."

The steps went away again, and putting his hand on Hubert's shoulder as he stood looking mournfully out of the window, he said, "It must come, Hu., and there is no use in putting off the evil day ; the horrible missing of the one goodbye makes all the others seem ten times worse."

His nephew turned. "I knew you were thinking that, and I didn't know what to say, poor dear old uncle. I asked papa for this for you yesterday." He took a ring-case from his waistcoat pocket and pushed it into his hand. "I have thought of it lots of times, but kept on putting it off, but I made up my mind I would yesterday."

"I ought to have done it myself, but never could determine to speak. Thanks, many; you have twice brought me the same sort of comfort when I most wanted it," he said, putting the ring on his finger.

"You must put on your glove too, uncle: papa said he could not endure to see you wear it, and I was to tell you so." Hubert rather wondered at missing the expected "Folly and nonsense!" but Oswald only said, "Very well: find me one;" and then, "Would you mind, Hu., joining me a minute in praying that we may both be kept faithful and obedient till we meet her again? I should like it."

Hubert's flush of pleasure as he looked up at him showed that he would. He slipped his hand at once within his, and they knelt together by the big armchair, associated already in the boy's mind with more than one treasured recollection. In after days none among them was more precious than that of the words spoken low and with sad earnestness beside him, some of them returning often to his mind when wide seas were rolling between the speaker and himself, and his heart was aching with sorrow, which only the thought of the truths they recalled could soothe. With what joyful satisfaction he joined in the petition, "Unite us as brothers in Christ more closely in love one to the other, and help us both on the way towards heaven. Though soon to be divided, comfort us in this sorrow by the knowledge that nothing can part us from Him, or from each other for eternity." All other thoughts,—the blue uniform, the ticking sound in his pocket, the sword he had been handling, what Harry would say,—were all driven from his mind as he followed the prayer as it went on, and felt carried into the presence of God by a faith stronger than his own. It was a new and a strange experience to him, and as the sound of the carriage on the drive was heard outside, and they rose to their feet, he brushed his hand over his eyes, beginning, "I am so very glad you—"

and then breaking down altogether threw himself into his uncle's arms with a deep sob.

"Come, come, Hu! I didn't mean to upset you. It comforts me."

"Oh, yes," Hubert sobbed out, "but it makes it ten thousand times worse to think of losing you." Running steps on the stairs made the only answer possible: "There, dear boy, dry your eyes and come down. And Oswald went to the door as Maxwell knocked, exclaiming at his delay, "Father says you will be late if you don't start at once."

"No, not with half-an-hour to spare at the station. I was never late yet, Max, in my life, and certainly will not be this time, as my train brings me in in the nick of time to dine with the Admiral."

"Then I most certainly wouldn't miss it," said Maxwell. "When shall I talk like that, of going to dine with the General?"

"When you give up idling," said his father's voice on the stairs, and they went down together.

O'Hara's curiosity and affection were gratified by a thorough inspection, the warm good-bye, and a special charge to "comfort Hu." The next visit was to the library, where Oswald went in alone and shut the door behind him. "I am come to say good-bye, Mr. Maynard."

"No! are you really though?" the tutor said, starting up from his writing. "I forgot it was to-day: I am very sorry, very sorry indeed." He was looking at him with a startled expression of distress, and Oswald suddenly guessing at the reason, as he remembered that his last sight of him as a boy was when he left the Cumberland home in his first uniform, said bluntly, "Oh, I am sorry I came in like this, I never thought of what you would be remembering: one walks among many ghosts in this house. Never mind, I am going away for good now, out of your way, so you won't be troubled with the sight of me any more. I hope you will

let us be open friends when I come back again, whenever that may be."

The tutor shook his head. "You think the request I made a weakness, no doubt; but thank you all the same, much, for your most kind attention to it. If there is anything I can do for you—"

"Yes: befriend my poor little nephew for me. He is breaking his heart after me, and I know with good reason how kind you can be if you choose."

"I don't know that the dragon of a tutor is much likely to be welcome even in the guise of a friend, and I don't suit boys."

"Oh, nonsense, Mr. Maynard! You know well enough what you can be when you choose, if you drop your newly-acquired tutor manner, and grow to care for him: and he is worth love."

"You mistake me, Mr. Raymond, if you think that any difference of manner has been assumed with my office. It is my nature that is changed; and it is no longer in me to care for anyone with affection."

"Oh, well: be kind to him for my sake and old times. It goes greatly against the grain leaving him just now, I assure you."

"Yes, yes: I understand. And, no doubt, he is quite satisfied that your deepest regret is for him alone," the tutor said, with his half smile, looking full into his face. "Never fear: you will get over your sorrows quickly enough when you are once afloat."

The blood rose in Oswald's cheek as he answered, with some coldness, "There are naturally many causes of regret to make this parting more bitter than any former one. But now I must not stay. Good-bye."

He held out his hand, which Mr. Maynard taking, looked up at him, with a look very unlike himself, for a moment, and shook it with a warm pressure, and a "Good-bye, Oswald: God bless you!"

"Thank you," the other said, and left the room.

Outside, in the hall, the farewells went on, till Oswald, rubbing his hand, declared it half crushed, as one after another of the servants had hold of it.

"Now for the kissing," he said, with a ghastly attempt at a laugh, as the little wet faces were held up to him. "'Bert, you are not too old for a kiss yet. You will have Hu. for yourself again, now I am out of the way. Send me a letter sometimes in his, and tell me about the foot-ball and all. And you, dear May, write to me : do. Keep me up in the school and poor-people gossip, which Hu. can't do : will you?"

"I shall feel quite proud, uncle," she answered, with shaking voice, refusing herself the tears which, from Maude's eyes, were falling fast.

"Why, Maude, you haven't been at home with me long enough to miss me!" he said, with a kiss on each cheek. "We must do French fashion : eh? Good-bye, Max. You will be lieutenant too by the next time we meet."

"Yes, but not R.N., thank you."

Then there was the brother in the porch ; his sad eyes watching from under his knit brows the tall blue figure, as it bent for each farewell. And as Oswald turned to him, he held out both hands to him, saying, in a choked voice, "I would give you her blessing with mine, if I could, dear son."

It was nearly the first reference to his lost wife his brother had heard him make through their long months together ; and the feeling which prompted it now was fully appreciated, and doubled the warmth of their farewell. There was one more to say, and they would be over till the end of the drive. Geraldine was standing the other side of the porch, to be out of the way of the family party.

"Tell Colonel Dennis, please, that I am sorry not to have seen him before going. Harry has promised to write, so I shall hear of you."

"None out of your own home will miss you more than

he and I," she said ; while Mr. Raymond asked, at the same minute, "When did you say we might look for you back again?"

"Not for three years, I fear." And in the burst of a general "Oh!" he added, "And the pleasantest sight my eyes could have then would be to see you here, Miss Dennis."

He raised her hand to his lips, and putting on his cap, retreated precipitately into the carriage, where Hubert was already waiting for him ; his sharp "Drive on" hardly giving time for Maxwell to toss his forgotten great coat through the window.

Frost, snow, ice, and skates would surely cheer up any boy, the tutor thought to himself, as he watched the skating party setting off on New Year's morning. So too thought May, as she tried to excite her listless-looking brother to enjoyment, as they went down the bank of their sheet of water together. Maxwell and Osbert glided and turned, shot far from the bank and back again, shouting to Maude and Geraldine, who, never having learnt to balance themselves, stood wrapped up in their furs, envying May.

"Just look how Hu. skates!" his sister said. "He sails about as if he were moving by clock-work, and were well wound up, and would go on like that till he runs down."

"I wish he didn't look so depressed, poor fellow!" the other girl said, pityingly.

"Oh, it's nonsense being depressed!" cried Maude. "People can always get over things if they like. Hu.!" she called. "What are you looking at now? Have you found the beloved face in the ice this time, or do you imagine yourself a man-of-war, sailing about like that?"

Hubert started, and struck out with a spurt of vigour for a few minutes.

"Isn't this delicious?" cried May, as she flew past him ; and, returning, finished her sentence with, "I wish you looked as if you liked it."

"Let us chase him into spirit!" Maxwell cried, overhearing her.

And so they did: all four bearing down upon him, holding hands, while he darted from them; then waiting till they drew near, turned by Godfrey's shoulder, and was soon far behind them.

"Well done, Hu.!" cried the girls; while he quickly relapsed into his solemn motion. But he was not long left in peace.

"What letters are you cutting there, Hu.?" his sister called to him, as their walk brought them near again. "It looks suspiciously like O and S. Can't you get on to the W next?"

"How you do tease that poor boy!" Geraldine said.

And Hubert answering, "Do leave off, Maude!" gained the opposite bank, and was soon walking leisurely homewards.

"There, now: there, he is off to mope with O'Hara!" his sister said. "He and you just spoil him, and make him ten times worse. I would laugh him out of his nonsense in no time, if I had him to myself."

"Do you think ridicule cures low spirits, Maude?"

"Fancy talking of low spirits in a boy of thirteen, and all because a sailor uncle goes to sea! It is you and O'Hara keep him moping, with all your pitying."

She would have said so still more to see him soon after, by the couch, one of the child's arms round his neck, and he sitting, doing nothing, staring gloomily into the fire. O'Hara had been ailing for some days; and to stay upstairs and keep him company in his bed-room was a good excuse for melancholy brooding, and for escaping from his sister's bantering raillery, his brother's upbraiding of his dulness, and, worse than all, his father's exacting claims and uneasy watching. More than one grave rebuke had his silence and mournful looks brought upon him; none more stern than on the occasion when the new watch had been shown.

"Your uncle is an extravagant young man, I must say,"

Mr. Raymond said, as he handed it back to him ; not over well pleased that a present he had meant should have been from himself had been forestalled. "That is a very expensive watch. Mind you take care of it, and never use it cricketing."

Hubert's answer, explaining whose it had been, was ended with the words, sounding to his father most causelessly vehement, "There is not much need, I am sure, to tell me to take care of the most precious thing I have got."

And Mr. Raymond was surprised to see his eyes filling with tears. He said, impatiently, "Really, Hubert, you have grown most terribly weepful lately. You are getting quite old enough to control yourself. I shall be sorry to see your uncle in the house, if his going has this effect upon your temper. I never saw you like it before ; and such marked continuous fretting after one gone is singularly ungracious, to say the least of it, to those left behind."

"It is not temper, papa. And I call it too bad that one mayn't even look unhappy, when one loses the one one cares most for in the world."

"Oh, indeed ! is that the case ?" his father answered, in great displeasure, and turned from him, just as Hubert had realized what he had said, and the magnitude of his offence.

His earnest apology could not remove the effect of his words ; and he felt it was many days before he could take his old place again. His restless feeling, under the consciousness of change in his father's manner, went a long way to lead to some change in his own ; but the most effectual cure was administered by the tutor, when study began again, with the first week of the year. Diligent or willing work was difficult for either boy to give, with a hard frost continuing, and skates at hand. And when the punishment chosen for bad preparation was keeping in, Osbert's temper grew as bad as Hubert's moodiness made his ; while their tutor's sternness increased each day with his determination to exact perfection.

Hubert was wretched, and at the same time so filled with self-pity, as to lack all the spirit necessary to use the remedy which his own will could have brought. The one Mr. Maynard brought him came to him thus. It was one afternoon when he was finishing some repetition, after his brother had left them.

"If you call that learning, you are mistaken in thinking I shall," the tutor said; and flung a third book upon the table, sending it and its companions across to where Hubert sat. "Take them upstairs, and your exercise; this is the fit end for such as this," tearing across, as he spoke, the one which had just been handed to him. "Don't go near little Dennis' room: go to the empty one."

"And get frozen!" cried Hubert, losing all control over himself. "I only hope you will enjoy your fire here meanwhile."

Mr. Maynard's look was such as Hubert had not seen for many months.

"You had better try speaking like that once again," he said, his eyes glaring from under his heavy brows. "It is a pity," he added, with his bitterest sneer, "that your uncle cannot look in to see the humble disciple, without his master's eye on him. I find I was right in my first supposition, that the wonderful change was nothing after all but favour-currying with one who was too good to waste his care on you, and too simple-hearted to understand such hypocrisy."

It was little wonder that when the words were ended Hubert walked from the room without thought of reply. A long time passed, and for more than an hour the darkness had been doubling the cold of unfurnished fireless rooms; and the tutor was beginning to think he had better leave his armchair and book, and go in search of his pupil, when the door was pushed open, and (blue, shivering, and blinking his heavy eyes in the bright light) Hubert came in. As each sentence of the perfected lesson was repeated, it was

interrupted by a deep quivering sob ; and Mr. Maynard laid down the book, saying, " I cannot hear you till you are quiet."

" If you wouldn't mind correcting the exercise first," the boy said, and stood shivering before the large fire, trying how many he could count before another sob should come.

The tutor watched him as he read, half repenting the severity of his words, and of the punishment, which plainly had not been shirked, as he saw by the trembling lips and ceaseless shiver.

" This has but few mistakes, and they are those of ignorance, not carelessness. Put it aside for correction in lesson time. Now are you ready ?"

The lessons went faultlessly without many pauses, and the " Very well " gained in strength as it was repeated once and again, and the books were handed back.

" Don't leave the fire till you are warm through : you stayed upstairs much longer than was in the least necessary."

" Yes : I didn't think about the cold when it got dark."

" What were you doing ?"

But to that there was no answer from the boy, who knelt on, warming his stiff hands, and his tutor watching his colourless face and stupified look, rose and left the room. Returning some minutes after with a glass of hot milk and water, he found him with his head in the seat of the armchair, his whole frame shaken with crying, and the words, " Oh uncle, uncle : how can I do without you ! " repeated once and again. The tutor listened till he could stand it no longer.

" Hubert, get up and drink this. What is making you cry like this ?"

With a start he rose slowly to his feet. Then suddenly seizing Mr. Maynard's hand, he cried, " Oh, will you say,—do say please,—that you didn't really think what you said just now ; it is no use even telling you I am sorry if you do."

It was a startling request, and granting or refusing it was

avoided by the question, "Had I reason for thinking otherwise?"

"Oh, I have been so bad to you and everybody; but indeed I never did think I could have been so miserable; please do say you will forgive me, and I will try to forget him and be better."

"Your lessons just now," the other answered gravely, not willing to yield too quickly, "give me hope you may mean truly."

"Mr. Maynard," Hubert cried, letting go his hand, "don't speak like that: it doesn't make me untrue before, because I have been being so horribly careless and grumpy. Everything seemed wrong: you don't know what I lost when uncle went."

"I know pretty well, perhaps better than you think. Don't begin to cry again, tears never mend matters. When troubles come you must learn to endure them without giving in, as every man must, and be thankful when they come naturally, and are not self-made. You should remember Solomon's words, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." You will never be worth anything unless you learn to subdue feeling to duty, and to hide suffering from others' eyes. Now sit down on the stool and warm yourself, and drink your milk: you look shrivelled still."

"But do say you forgive me first, Mr. Maynard. I truly am more sorry than I can tell you: let me show you I am, somehow. I'll do anything you tell me, only say you don't think I was a hypocrite: you may give me a caning if you like."

The tutor smiled. "Thank you, I have no particular wish to take the trouble. Let your conduct and work be such as it was while your uncle was here, and I will believe your discipleship to his teaching sincere."

Hubert's heartfelt "Thank you, sir," expressed as much as two words could, and as they sat on together before the

fire he was surprised to find Mr. Maynard talking pleasantly to him, as though nothing had passed between them, with more of friendliness than he had ever shown him, till he grew confidential himself, showed him his watch, and read him Oswald's note of three lines, scrawled as his ship was moving. Then the tutor told him stories of two old Trafalgar sailors he had known in his boyhood, till they were both startled by the ringing of the tea bell.

"Are my eyes terribly red still?" Hubert said, as he stood up.

"Not worse than they have often been lately," his companion answered. "You can say you have been sitting with me, and that will account for it."

"Be the reason, you mean, why I am able to see at all. Thank you very much for letting me stay here with you, sir."

"When you like to do so again I have got a book to show you which will explain what I was telling you the other day about the religious beliefs of the Chinese. It is a history of China by a French Jesuit missionary, Du Halde. If you don't go on with your notes that chart of yours will never get done."

Hubert knew then that he was really forgiven, the subject of the chart had been so entirely dropped for some time past.

There was no more sulking after that afternoon, and Maude's joking had to cease as Maxwell and Osbert found themselves outdone upon the ice, where Geraldine was soon at work under Hubert's tuition. Her brother remained for some time too unwell to be moved, and Mr. Raymond saw with satisfaction the daily cementing of the friendship he had once viewed with jealous dislike, secretly hoping that it might prove a bond to Raymond Stoke too strong to be willingly broken, now that the one seawards was, he flattered himself, beginning to slacken, as Hubert's mourning for his uncle's loss seemed to have ceased, and the subject of the navy was never mentioned by him.

CHAPTER XII.

PUPIL AND FRIEND.

"But ever must the tender bonds be broken,
And each go forward distant and alone."—*Möwes*

THE ice had passed away, the winter days were succeeded once more by the keen spring winds sweeping through the leafless woods, and then the warm showers bathed the trees, softening the light mould, and bringing out the tender green tint over branches and soil, and the nest-building birds were busy. Their music sounded in full chorus one April day. The twin brothers had been enjoying themselves climbing from tree to tree, visiting the bird nurseries in search of an egg here and there to fill up gaps in their collection, and now Hubert was walking leisurely homewards basket in hand. Turning round a belt of trees he found himself suddenly face to face with his eldest sister, walking with her head down and crying as she went. She started at sight of him, and drying her eyes began to walk on hastily, looking vexed, he thought, that he had seen her so.

"Maude, what is it?" he ventured. "Has anything happened? Papa isn't worse, is he?"

"No, no!" she answered. And he added, "I asked you to stay with him, and you said you would."

"Yes: but I couldn't. Nurse is with him: never mind about me, it is only something has worried me."

They walked on together in silence for a while, till

Hubert exclaimed, "Does papa know of it? Oh, I hope he doesn't."

"No, no! and don't you say a word about me to him," she said, catching his arm. "Promise me you won't,—hush, though, here is Mr. Maynard coming."

They were upon the broad drive, and the tutor came up to them and passed them without notice, at a quicker pace than his usual one; he was stepping unequally, and as they turned into the flower garden they saw him stagger, catch at a tree, and sink upon the iron seat below it. Hubert sprang from his sister's side and was beside him in a minute. "Are you ill, sir," he asked, looking anxiously into the thin grey face leaning against the stem of the tree. The eyes were half closed, and the hat had fallen from the thin hair. He sat down by him and took his hand and rubbed it upon his knee. "Mr. Maynard, are you feeling ill? Maude," he cried, as his sister joined them, "What shall we do?"

"I'll fetch him some water," she said, hurrying to the house; but before she reached it the tutor had drawn himself up with a heavy sigh, and begun looking round for his lost hat. Hubert found it for him, saying, "Are you better? Don't move yet."

Mr. Maynard looked at him as if hardly taking in who he was, and said, as if to himself, "Truly is it written, 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me: I will repay, saith the Lord.' Retribution follows on, however long it lingers. Is this the last? Never you wake it, boy, if you would not bid an eternal farewell to peace."

"Mr. Maynard, what are you thinking about?" Hubert asked uneasily, with a sudden fear that he was losing his senses. "Here is Maude, bringing you some water."

The tutor started and moved feebly, trying to rise to take it from her; but she made him keep his seat and drink what she had brought, saying, "I wish it had been wine, only you looked so ill I did not like to wait to get it. I hope you are better."

"Thank you, yes. I did not feel well ; but I want no wine. Don't let me detain you : Hubert will stay with me a few minutes."

"Then will you go to papa, Maude?"

She shook her head with a quick, "No, no."

"Yes, you must : he wants a note written before post-time."

"I will send May then."

"No : she writes such a great scrawl, and wants every word told her, it fidgets him : you must go."

"Very well, I will," she said, with a sudden change of tone, "if you will give me the promise I asked for just now."

"Very well," he said : "only go, and stay with him till I come."

The tutor's head had fallen upon his arm on the back of the seat, and the boy not liking to disturb him sat looking over the flower-beds, thinking. Presently the little ones, returning from their afternoon walk, came by them with their governess, and Hubert silenced them as they rushed at him by a glance at his companion and a whispered, "He isn't well."

"Then he shall have all my big bunch of daisies," little Helen whispered back to him : "give them to him, Hu., please, when he wakes." The little feet trotted past, and Mr. Maynard put out his hand for the flowers and buried his nose in their fresh pink-tipped petals. "Read that, Hubert," he said, putting a large yellow envelope into his hand. "It was like this years ago : daisies, and a baby voice and loving thought, and that is the end of it."

The telegram which Hubert opened and read contained only the words, "Come at once. Miss Maynard taken dangerously ill."

"What does this mean?" he cried. "Who is it? aren't you going?"

"I have just been down to the station : the only train

catching the express does not leave till seven this evening," the tutor answered, in a voice sounding thin and wearied.

"And have you got your things put up? Can I do it for you, and does papa know you are going?"

"No, indeed: I forgot that. I have put my things together; you must tell him for me. I cannot see him, and it would only agitate him for nothing: say to him that I am sure to be back within a week. I am sorry to leave you idle, but it can't be helped. Keep Osbert with you."

Distressed at his hopeless tone, Hubert said, "Perhaps you will find her better when you get there, after all. Uncle told me you had a sister he used to be so fond of."

"Hush, be quiet!" the tutor cried: "I told him never to speak of me or mine. This is my only child, my daughter."

Hubert gasped out an "Oh!" as his companion's head dropped again upon his arm.

"Mr. Maynard," he said, after a few minutes silence, in which he had sat looking at him in mute astonishment, "mightn't I come with you? You do look so ill, I am sure you are not well enough to travel alone."

His voice showed his feeling, and his tutor roused himself again to say, "Would your father let you, think you? I do indeed feel unfit to move; oh, how infinitely more willingly would I lie down in my grave and be at rest! But life and suffering are worse to bear than death and peace; and so are mine!"

"Oh, don't talk like that, please!" Hubert said in great distress, tears filling his eyes. "Perhaps she will be better when you get to her. I am so very sorry for you: I'll go at once and ask papa."

"Tell him I should esteem it a great kindness if he would spare you: I dread to think of travelling alone to-night."

Hubert could hardly believe his ears as the admission was made, and he rose at once, saying, "He shall let me go: I shall be so glad if I am of any use to you. Do go and lie

down in the library till it is time to start, you will get so cold here." But his voice seemed unheeded, and the tutor had sunk back into his former position.

The boy's hasty step and impetuous eagerness were unconsciously checked as he reached the door of his father's bedroom, though even as it was he was received with an expostulating rebuke from the nurse, who was busy with the fire: "How can you, Master Hubert? you come banging in as if this were the nursery!"

"I thought I came in as quiet as a mouse," Hubert answered, stepping softly to the side of the bed where his father lay, white and feeble looking. He had been ill during the past three weeks; at first, when the early spring days came, which would always be the fullest of sorrow in the year for him, lying prostrated with violent pain in the head, so severe, that Maude, unaccustomed to seeing him suffer, was much alarmed, and Hubert and May, beginning with consoling her by accounts of many other days spent in darkness and silence, grew frightened themselves at the long continuance. It was a relief to them all when Mr. Maynard counselled a summons being sent to the Doctor. He was at the Park every day after that, and talked of a slight attack of brain fever, insisting on perfect stillness, and at first admitting none but Maude to supplement nurse's watching. Hubert, however, was asked for so constantly that he was soon allowed to take his place in the sick room, where since then his attendance had been close, and he felt now as he stood with the long thin fingers closing round his, how difficult he had made it for himself to propose his present request.

"Glad to see you, dear son, noisy or quiet," was the welcome, after nurse's grumble. "You have been out long."

"Yes," he said, panting with eagerness, yet not daring to hurry his words, or introduce his story at once; "but Maude has written your letter instead. You haven't tired yourself, have you?"

"I am always tired now, my boy, and Dr. Scott has just been here ; but he says I am getting on."

"Oh, I wish he would see Mr. Maynard, then !"

"Don't worry papa about him," Maude said, looking round from her seat in the window.

"What about him? What is the matter with him? Has he begun to turn crusty again after this long calm? If so, by all means catch the Doctor for a prescription."

"You shouldn't be talking, if you please, sir," interrupted nurse at the foot of the bed: "you have been talking to Miss Raymond quite enough, and the Doctor said I was to be sure not to be letting more than two be in the room at any time, and one was best."

"Well take yourself out then, nurse," Hubert said, laughing, "and we shall be the right number. I will talk to him a bit."

The two were always sparring, to Mr. Raymond's amusement: nurse upholding her theory that silence was cure; Hubert advocating the advantages of entertainment. He could hardly just now bear her interference with patience, on the point of beginning his story, and repeated, "Yes, I *will* talk," with a look that exasperated her.

"I wish you were in white frocks again, sometimes, Master Hubert, that I do, with your masterful ways."

"And then you would carry him off bodily, nurse," his father said, smiling. "I am not going to talk, but to listen to him."

Hubert began to grow desperate, as the next objection was, "I did promise Miss Helen she should come and say good-night, and if you tire your papa she'll have to be disappointed again, poor little dear, as she was last night, and have another cry."

"Oh, nurse, do get along with you! this is what you call keeping papa quiet," he said impatiently; when to his relief his father banished her, saying, "Leave us now, and bring Miss Helen before she goes to bed. I hope you look after

the children, Maude," he added, as the door closed, "and read to them, and teach them their prayers, and all that."

The girl was leaning against the side of the open window, looking out, and turned with a start, saying, "Oh, May and Miss Sturt see to that: they don't want me. I hear Minnie play."

Her father sighed and turned his head upon his pillow, and Hubert felt further from his object than before. He began again, "Papa, I haven't told you about Mr. Maynard yet: such a dreadful thing has happened! Did you know he had been married?"

"No," said Mr. Raymond, looking surprised: "has he? Very odd of him never to have told me."

"Well, it is true; and he has just had a telegram to say that his only daughter is dangerously ill, and he wants to go to her at once."

"His daughter!" Mr. Raymond exclaimed, half rising on his elbow in his astonishment, and looking distressed. "Poor fellow! Wants to go to her: of course he does. He is going, of course? Tell him to have the carriage to the station. Who would ever have thought that old piece of stiffness was a father?"

"Was that the reason of his faintness in the garden just now?" Maude asked.

"Yes: and he is feeling very ill still. He wants me to go with him, papa, if you will let me."

"Wants you to go with him?" Mr. Raymond repeated. "What an absurd fancy!" while Hubert exclaimed, "Oh, you must let me go, papa! You don't know how bad he looks; and he says himself he dreads travelling alone."

"What good would you be to him, I should like to know? No: nonsense! Say no more about it: I cannot be worried. Fancy my letting you go all the way to—— Cumberland: isn't it, where he lived?"

Hubert was just beginning, "It is only as far as"—— feeling his case very hopeless, as his father's agitated manner

and sparkling eyes warned him against irritating him, when there was a knock at the door, and Dr. Scott came in, with his noiseless tread.

"Why, Doctor, I thought you were gone!" said Mr. Raymond.

"So I was; but here I am, back again," he said.

He was a tall portly man, with curling iron-grey hair, a very old friend at the Park, where he was a great favourite with the children, who thought it a piece of extra good fortune when any ailment could be considered sufficiently serious to demand his attendance. Hubert alone boasted of having never needed him; and it was a standing joke between him and the Doctor what he would do to him when once he got him into his hands.

Hubert's clouded face brightened now as he began: "I have come back about your tutor: poor man! Ah, I see your boy has been at you already. I have just found him in the garden in a very bad way: there is something very wrong about him. He tells me bad news calls him away by the evening train, and he is hardly more fit to travel than you are. He said that Hubert here had kindly proposed going with him; but he feared your not approving, as I see you do not."

"No: certainly I do not," Mr. Raymond said, moving restlessly, with his eyes fixed on the boy's face, and speaking rapidly. "I have no notion of his being dragged off to Cumberland, or anywhere else, at a moment's notice like this. It is an absurd fancy. He would be of no use to him: he knows nothing of travelling."

"You are mistaken," said the Doctor, in his quietest voice. "He has no intention of going to Cumberland. All he proposes is a run to Bath, and back again in a few days. He wants your boy simply as a companion, as the recurring feeling of faintness naturally makes him dislike being alone. A sight of his face, I am sure, would make you yield to him willingly."

"I should know no peace with Hubert away, and travelling, and by night too."

"Oh, papa, you are not afraid of railway accidents: are you?" cried the boy. "Oh, do let me go! I have never been in a train; and I want to feel what it is like to go so fast."

The doctor burst out laughing. "There is a confession for a lad of — how old are you?—in the latter half of the nineteenth century! For mercy's sake let him go and enjoy the feeling!"

"There never happened to be any occasion for him to travel as yet; the elder ones were always taken. No: if anything were to happen to him, and just now too, it would kill me," Mr. Raymond said, pressing his hand over his eyes and forehead.

"What should happen?" asked the doctor, quietly, silencing, by a sign, both Maude and Hubert. "My two little lads of eleven and nine go to school alone, there and back, further than to Bath, three times a year, and no harm has ever befallen them. Why fear for this great fellow, and with his tutor? But now I cannot have this discussion going on, or I shall have you back to last week's state. No: silence, Hubert! I will not have any more talking. If you make him ill, no entreaties shall prevent me having his head shaved this time."

With a grimace at the Doctor, Hubert let the threat take effect, and remained silent, in a fever of suppressed impatience, watching his father's troubled face, as he seemed searching vainly for some fresh excuse to refuse.

"I am sorry this has come to worry your mind just now," Dr. Scott said, gently; "but I cannot but feel for that wretched forlorn-looking man. I declare, I would go with him myself, but that I cannot. Let me say, as a friend, you will feel more disturbed to-night, and less able to rest, thinking of him alone, than if you feel you have spared your son for a few days for an act of charity. Now,—Yes or No? I cannot let you think about it longer."

"I can say neither. You must all do as you will," was Mr. Raymond's answer. "Come and say Good-bye, Hubert, before you go."

The tone was as if the contemplated journey was to India; and Hubert was beginning, "If it weren't for Mr. Maynard," when again the doctor signed him to silence and to the door.

"Your head is in pain again?" he said, with his fingers on his patient's wrist. "Here, Hubert, come back, and say Good-bye at once. We must have no more of this to-day. Will you kindly lower the blinds, Miss Raymond, and I will ask you to leave us too?"

Hubert was by his father's side in a close embrace in a moment; and the Doctor wondered at its long continuance, as he stood waiting, with a glass in his hand; at the murmured words of prayer for guarding, and still more at the tears in Mr. Raymond's eyes, as he watched the boy to the door, and then buried his aching head in the pillow. The thought which gave the sting to this, the first parting of their lives, was, that it was but a foretaste of what was to come before the year was out; and if this had been forced on him against his will, what power should he have to avoid the other, with more determination and right on the side of the one who would tear his treasure from him? Surely, too, he thought, if his eyes were dancing at the idea of a journey in a railway carriage, what could ever have strength of allurements sufficient to withstand all the temptations held out to him to follow his uncle's life?

"Draw the curtains too, Doctor, and leave me to myself. I would rather be alone."

"Yes: darkness and solitude are your best companions just now. Don't let needless anxiety undo their work for you." And the doctor left the room, called back again before the door was shut. "Kindly tell Maude to see that he takes a great coat; and he must have money."

"Yes, yes: I will stay a while and see them off. Trust me for knowing how to play father."

"And tell Maynard I lay my commands upon him that he is not to take him near the house where his child is till he knows whether the illness is anything infectious."

"Yes, yes: make yourself easy. Now try and sleep: no one shall come near you."

His soft steps faded from the door; and in stillness and darkness Mr. Raymond lay with throbbing pulses and quickened hearing, unable to prevent the straining after the far away sounds which reached him: till little Helen's faint crying on the distant stairs recalled the permission he had given, and he waited for her coming till he knew it must have been forbidden: then there was the sound of carriage wheels, a few rushes on the stairs, opening and shutting of doors, the wheels again, something shouted in the doctor's voice, and the hall door shut.

"Really gone!" he sighed then, and turned, trying to forget and sleep; but though nothing but the faint flickering of the firelight moved to disturb him, visions more distracting than any realities chased each other through his fevered brain,—visions where the same figure was always in danger or suffering: the same brown eyes looking appealingly towards him, and the same voice crying for help which he could not give.

Maude, meanwhile heard the hall door shut with a feeling of relief; her tears, and curiosity as to their cause, would be forgotten before Hubert came back, and she turned upstairs to her room, where she sat and cried till she was tired, and then went to entertain the Doctor in the drawing-room.

He was little satisfied when he paid his visit upstairs, and returned again saying,—“One ought to be very well up in one's patient's feelings before venturing to interfere in matters outside one's province.”

“What is it, Dr. Scott: isn't he so well?” asked both the girls.

“It is astonishing how he seems to take this little journey of that boy's. If I had dreamed it would have had this

effect upon him, Mr. Maynard might have gone to Jericho alone, before I would have said one word to send him with him."

"I only wondered to hear that papa had ever said Yes," said May.

"Why did no one think to propose that young monkey's going instead?" said the doctor, pacing about the room.

"Ugh, catch me!" came a grunt from the sofa, where Osbert at full length was enjoying his unexpected holiday.

"And Mr. Maynard wouldn't have thanked us if we had," said Maude. "Papa will get over it by to-morrow. Hubert began about it in such a hurry it flustered him."

"Still, for the life of me, I can't see why it should affect him like this," said the doctor, himself a father of five schoolboys.

"You won't go and leave us, will you?" asked May imploringly. "It feels so desolate without Mr. Maynard or Hubert; and nurse croaks so, she makes me feel as if papa would never get well."

"He will get well with care, though it will be a slow business. I shall telegraph for Hubert back if he is like this to-morrow. I may trust you, Miss Raymond, but no one else is to go to him without my leave. You must not distress yourself too much my dear," he added, noticing her swollen eyes: "he will be better presently, with God's blessing. I will stay here to-night."

Away in the scudding train sat the two travellers: Hubert with his face at the window watching the lights, and trees, and houses, as they rushed past them.

"I am not tired, thank you; I should like to go on all night, except for you," he answered, in reply to the repeated suggestion that he should go to sleep. "We shall be there soon now, shan't we?"

"An hour-and-a-half yet," was the answer, in a tone of such endurance that Hubert turned from watching the flying lights and shadowy forms, to beg his companion in his

turn to try and sleep. "It would make the time seem shorter."

"No doubt," the tutor said; "but some things are not to be had at will: few blessings are. Now, it is past twelve, let me have the comfort of seeing you sleeping."

"If it will make you more comfortable of course I will," the boy said, looking anxiously at the face opposite, so full of suffering. "I wish I could think of something to do for you first."

The only answer was a shake of the head, and then,—
"Now, wrap your coat round your knees, and here is room by me for your feet."

"Yes, in a minute," Hubert said; and taking a small book from his pocket began to turn over the leaves, changing his seat to one under the lamp, and reading for a few minutes.

"What are you after now?" asked his tutor impatiently.

"Only reading my verses before I go to bed,—to sleep, I mean. I won't be a minute."

"Is that a Testament? You should never do that sort of thing in public."

"Why, what is the harm?" Hubert asked in astonishment. "I must do it, I never go to sleep without: and it isn't a Testament either; only a little book uncle wrote out for me, like one he made for himself; he likes it when he is on night watch."

He soon moved back to his corner, saying,—
"Now then, I am ready for bed. Mr. Maynard," he said, as he tucked the coat and travelling rug over their knees, "you would like these verses I am sure, if you don't mind reading them: do you?" he asked timidly, putting the open book into his hand. "It is strange, these are the ones for to-day."

The tutor took the book, saying, "Now, lie back and be quiet. I have visions of your father before me when I see you awake at this hour: I cannot conceive how he came to consent to your coming."

"The Doctor did it," said Hubert, sleepiness already stealing upon him. The four verses which the tutor read were written in a clear round hand, easily read under the dancing light. The first was from Lamentations: "The Lord will not cast off for ever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies, for He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;" the second was, "He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness; the third and fourth, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Below was a quotation: "Consider the example of your Lord under suffering, inasmuch as it is appointed for the servant to be as His Lord."

The loud screaming of the railway whistle at the entrance to a tunnel broke the boy's sleep, and he opened his eyes to see his companion with his head sunk in his hands, and the book on the seat by his side.

"Are you feeling ill again, Mr. Maynard?" he asked, sitting up and touching his knee. "Have some more brandy: the Doctor said you were to take it."

"Thank you, not now: no. Go to sleep again. Here is your book: better put it in safety."

"You did like the verses, didn't you?" Hubert asked as he pocketed it.

"For those who can count them spoken for them they must be pleasant and consoling."

"Why, they are said for everyone, Mr. Maynard."

"No, they are not:" said the tutor decidedly. "You must not confound the chastening of a son with the judgment pursuing a criminal; the one is sent out of the multitude of His mercies, to perfect the holiness of the pure in heart and prepare for everlasting partaking of His holiness; the other is sent from His justice, to work out the penalty of sin, as you may read on the opposite page of your book: "Evil pursueth sinners." Now, lie back and

sleep on ; may you never forfeit and sin away the blessedness of the pure in heart."

"Mr Maynard, you shan't talk like that ; as if you and I weren't just alike."

"Heaven forbid !" said the tutor : while the boy went on earnestly,—

"I can't bear you to speak just as if God were angry with you, and making your little girl ill to punish you."

"Perhaps that is true, Hubert. But now go to sleep : it is a comfort to me to see you so."

Too sleepy to resist the order, Hubert's heavy eyes shut, and were only opened again when their destination was reached.

It was in the afternoon of the second day following, that Dr. Scott and the post bag found their way into the hall at Raymond Park, at the same minute. The latter was eagerly seized on by May, who was in waiting for it, and its contents emptied upon the table.

"I hope it is not missing this time," said the Doctor. "Ah, there it is, sure enough ;" as the black-edged envelope with the carefully written direction was turned up. "Give it to me, and I shall go up to be welcomed."

The anxious eyes turned towards the door sought his face eagerly, as he came into the dimly-lighted room.

"Did you happen to hear downstairs if the post had come?" was the first question.

"I did ; and am bringing you all the contents of the bag you are to be allowed to-day."

"All I care for just now, thank you. Naughty boy, why didn't he write before? Let in a little light, Doctor, and give it to me."

"There, I can't read it after all," he said, after a vain attempt to fix his eyes upon the writing. "I dare say there are no secrets : read it for me." And the Doctor read :—

"DEAR PAPA,

"It seems so odd to begin so, I have never done it before, and was just going to put "Uncle ;" we reached

Bath all right, and went to a very comfortable hotel. I think it is great fun travelling. I was so sleepy this morning : I never got up till half-past eight. Before I was dressed I had a message from Mr. Maynard, to say I was to come to him as he could not come back. He had gone on straight in the night, but would not let me. A foot-boy, who brought me the note, showed me the way, or I should never have got to him again. We came at last to a big house, which, the boy said, was a ladies' school : and as I came up the steps, ever so many girls came out, going for their walk. And didn't I get a good staring at ! I heard one of them say, "That is poor little Bell's brother, I suppose." Then I went into a room, and waited till a very grand lady came in. She was very kind, and talked to me. She wanted immensely to find out what I was to Mr. Maynard ; but I wasn't going to tell her, if he had not. I said he was a friend of my uncle's, and a great friend of mine, and of my father's. I suppose that is true about you ; it is about me, though it didn't use to be. Mr. Maynard came down after a little. I was quite frightened to see how he looked ; and he came and shook hands with me as if he didn't remember who I was. He and I had breakfast together. He wouldn't eat a thing, only drank his coffee as if he could hardly swallow it. Just as I was finishing, a servant came in, said Miss Maynard was awake, and Mrs. Malpas went away and said she would send for Mr. Maynard in a minute. Directly she was gone—but I can't write about that, only I am more glad than I can tell you that I came. Mr. Maynard is quite different from anyone else I have ever seen : other people don't seem to mind so much letting you see they are unhappy ; but I don't think he would make a sound if his leg were being cut off, and seems to hate that anyone should know what he is feeling, until at last he seems not to know what he says, or where he is. He says dreadful things then, and contradicts anything I say to try and comfort him. It looks so horrible to see him sitting crouched down with his head

in his hands. He doesn't mind doing that while I am with him; but the minute Mrs. Malpas and the doctor came in he got up and walked about the room as if he were all right, and then went away upstairs. He is so kind to me, and was so afraid I should be dull, that Mrs. Malpas said she had to drive somewhere after dinner, and would take me with her, so I am writing to you first. I call this a very good length for a letter, so now I shall say good-bye. How are you? I wish I knew. How I hope you are better, and your poor old head not hurting you. Please tell May to keep on my plan about the "Times," and send the note inside to Harry, and if uncle's letter comes for me please send it. Lots of love to every body, and no end to yourself.

"Your affectionate son,

H. C. RAYMOND.

"Evening. I am so angry with myself: I went for the drive and forgot the letter, and I know what an awful fidget you will be in. How Dr. Scott will abuse me; and he will be sure to say I made you ill; and then what will become of your hair? I really am very sorry: you won't get this till the afternoon now. I hope you haven't thought there has been a smash."

"There, I told you it was so," said the Doctor, as he finished reading. "Young monkey: won't I give him a fright! A remarkably good letter for a boy, though; I wish one of mine would send me such. He has nice feeling, natural and warm hearted, and a good hand, too, he writes."

"He has had plenty of practice," said Mr. Raymond, looking gratified and content as he took back his letter. "That is one good result of the perpetual yarn spinning he and Oswald keep up, that he does know how to tell one what he has been doing."

"But how exactly like a boy, though," said the doctor, "leaving out the very thing one most wants to know: no mention of the child!"

"No: but from his account of Maynard I should fear the

worst. I must say, while feeling most deeply for him, that he has shown a most strange want of confidence in me in all this. I have treated him with every possible kindness. The friend who introduced him to me told me he had seen much better days, and what cause there can be for this concealment I cannot imagine. Why, if I had thought for a moment he had a child, he should have had her here for her holidays, or anything."

"Oh, he is a very proud man, and extraordinarily reserved; I have seen that all along. But now here is my friend Miss May, creeping in for her share of the letter, and you must not be talking longer."

"Oh, I say, Dr. Scott," she cried, "this is too bad! There, you first steal it, and then come up and get the first read of it up here with papa. I thought you said you were going to write him a fresh prescription."

"So I am," said the doctor, laughing, "and at the same time one for Hubert, as a cure for carelessness. What is his wonderful plan about the *Times*?" he asked, as he seated himself, pen in hand.

"Only he cuts out all the things he thinks papa will like to hear when he gets well again, and arranges them by their dates, for he says he won't be able to bear the crackling of the whole paper. But I'm sure I don't know what you do like, papa: I tried this morning, but it all looked dull."

"Oh, leave it, my love," Mr. Raymond said, smiling: "I am not so wedded to the *Times* as all that. I did not know he was taking all that trouble. Now don't you go and write him a blowing up, doctor."

"No, no: only giving him a wholesome fright. There, Miss May, put that into your next letter for him. No, you can't open it, it is gummed," he said, laughing; and after a little talk about what he had come for he took his leave.

The first letter from home was received as Hubert sat by the table in Mr. Maynard's bedroom, writing his second to his father, and the solemn look on his face was changed to

a broad smile as he opened the Doctor's inclosure,—a caricatured likeness of his father with a smooth shaven head, the moustache and whiskers also gone, and underneath written, "The lamentable consequences of a son's thoughtlessness in a case of irritated brain." The home packet was a welcome enlivenment to his solitary watching by the still figure on the bed. Mr. Maynard had neither moved nor spoken since in the early morning he had looked in and found him there lying in his clothes, his face hidden on his folded arms. "I knew then," he wrote, "that his poor little girl was dead; he has been lying so now for hours, and doesn't seem to hear me when I speak to him. I cannot bear to see him so, and shall be very very glad to be home." On the envelope, when the letter reached its destination, was written, in Mr. Maynard's hand, "Back on the 12th, 6 p.m. H. is well."

There were only Maude and May to meet them in the hall when the day and hour came, and after the first hasty greeting Hubert turned from them, seeming to have neither eyes nor ears for anyone but his travelling companion, who had spoken no word to him since they had driven that morning to the churchyard on the hillside, where the dead child was left. Anxiously he watched him as he passed through the hall with an absent bow to the two girls, leaving their offered hands untouched, and then followed him to the stairs, saying, "Let me take your hat and coat," helping him to get rid of them, and then drawing his hand on his shoulder as he walked beside him to his room, his faltering step as he ascended the stairs showing that the added support was not needless.

"Now let me help you off with your boots, Mr. Maynard, and then lie down. I am going to bring you a cup of coffee: I told them to have it ready."

The tutor had seated himself, and looked up at him as he brought him his slippers, saying, "Thank you, Hubert. No: don't touch my boots; all this must stop now.

Remember we are only tutor and pupil again now. There is your sister calling you."

May had the coffee outside ; as he took it back into the room, he said, "I wish you would go to bed now, won't you? Only drink this first : you look worse than ever."

"You must go to your father now," Mr. Maynard answered : "don't keep him waiting. And remember what I say, we are pupil and tutor henceforth, and nothing more."

"I don't see what you mean, Mr. Maynard," Hubert said, proceeding to strike a match and light the fire. "How stupid of them not to have your room warm for you!"

"Go, go, Hubert : your care and thought must be given elsewhere now. Think no more about me, except to have your lessons perfect."

"Oh, don't, Mr. Maynard!" Hubert cried, his whole feeling revolting at the return to the old ideas,—the solemn memory still fresh upon him of the morning service, the open grave, and the father's stern tearless face,—while the tutor added, "But you may know that while I can receive no more, I can never forget all that has been given. Leave me now."

The boy saw the words meant a command, and went to the door, stopping to say shyly, "I told papa that you were a friend of mine, and I can't think only that you are our tutor, whatever you say." He saw that it was meant that others should think no otherwise when later in the evening Mr. Maynard appeared among them in the drawing-room just as usual, with the large Bible under his arm, and rang the bell and took his seat. Hubert had just left his father's room, and was lying on the rug playing with May's spaniel, hardly thinking of what was passing, when the tutor's voice in all its old sternness startled him. "Is that the way to appear in the drawing-room, Osbert, with dirty boots and unbrushed hair?"

The girls looked at one another, and the rebuke effectually checked the greeting Osbert was rising to give.

Hubert started to his feet. "Oh, Mr. Maynard, you are not going to read to-night, surely!" he exclaimed. "You are much too tired. I thought you had gone to bed."

"It is but nine o'clock: there is no great exertion in reading a chapter. Go to your seat, the servants are coming," was Mr. Maynard's answer, in his dryest tone.

Hubert looked at him a moment startled; then recalling his words in his room, with a quiet "Yes, sir," found his chair. He was not surprised directly prayers were over to hear the accustomed "Don't be dawdling, boys, and be punctual in the library to-morrow." He said his good night as coldly as it was answered, only his lingering look at the sunken thin face saying more. He would not listen to May's and Osbert's indignant exclamations upstairs, only saying, "Never mind: he and I understand each other. He never talks about things, and hates a fuss."

"Well, if you understand each other, I understand neither," was May's comment.

Osbert saying mournfully, as Hubert turned away to his father's room, "I had made up my mind to have a last treat of staying up late to-night. Who would have thought of his coming down like that, and catching me out, about my wretched boots? One would have thought he had something else to think of."



CHAPTER XIII.

DOUBT PLANTED.

“Submit his unworn shoulder to the yoke :
Break the stiff clod.”—*Young.*

SINCE Oswald had left them, every Friday afternoon had been devoted by Hubert and Geraldine, at his request, to a ride across the moor, as far as the lime kilns. A small Orphanage had been established there some years before, for children of the lime burners and quarrymen whose fathers had met their death by accident in the quarries or kilns. It was one of the legacies of care to Oswald by his sister-in-law. She had started it, and watched over its growth ; and he had warmly followed up the work during his stay at home. His sudden summons had left him no time to provide a successor, and he had welcomed Geraldine's offer to give any help she could in any of the works he was grieving over leaving, by asking her to take the superintendence of the Orphanage into her own hands. Accepting the post, at first because she could not bear to refuse the request seeing him so troubled, she had grown at last to look forward to the Friday afternoons as her happiest times. As for Hubert, he was always proud and happy when he had mounted her upon her grey pony, put the white reins into her hand, and springing to his own seat, followed her away into the sweet spring lanes. One great element of pleasure to both was the sense of doing deputy work for the one to whom the report of it was

regularly sent, in what Mr. Raymond called Hubert's yarn-spinning.

It was by an arrangement of Mr. Maynard's that Hubert was free to go. He was strong on the subject of fresh air and exercise, and it vexed him to know so much of the play hours passed indoors at Mr. Raymond's side; and, though to the disturbance of his own habits, he willingly consented to give him extra time with himself in the evenings, and sent him out: an arrangement more pleasing to the one boy for whom the pony was in waiting, than to the other, who pronounced it "awfully unfair," as he was left to profit by the undivided afternoon teaching. The ride generally ended with tea at the Grange, where, in O'Hara's room, a Greek lesson was always finishing when they came up the steps. The Xenophon readings had been confessed to; and Hubert heard with surprise the tone of address, so altered from that of a few months ago, as he and Geraldine came in at the window one Friday, a few weeks after his return from his visit to Bath.

"I think I have done better to-day, father: don't you?" And the satisfied answer, "Yes, my little son, much better,—more exactness. We shall turn you out a scholar yet."

Hubert had grown to fear the stately Colonel far less than he had; and it was without the old feeling of relief that he heard him add, "Ah, here they are, so I may go." As he spoke, he unscrewed and lowered the couch, saying, "Now, Geraldine, I insist that you see he lies flat for an hour. It is no use saying 'Oh, no!' my child: the Doctor has been speaking about it again."

"Very well: I will lie still, then," was the boy's answer, in a tone of such patient endurance, that Hubert longed to get hold of the screw-handle and alter the arrangement; but that he knew it would be false kindness.

O'Hara had taken a start of quick growth since the new year; and, with the strengthening of muscle, the spine was curving so quickly and perceptibly as to cause serious

uneasiness to his father and Dr. Scott. Long hours passed laid flat on his back, with no occupation possible, was no small suffering to the active-brained boy. But his mind seemed to grow meanwhile all the busier with thoughts and questionings, often startling to Hubert, who was always the one to receive them at last. With him it was the usual thing to hand them on to uncle Oswald, whose letters were nearly as frequent now at the Grange, delighting O'Hara with their pleasant chat, and descriptions, and explanations of difficulties, as in the Park post bag.

O'Hara petitioned now for his friend's company.

"I mustn't stay to tea," Hubert answered. "Papa said I was to come back to sit with him. I wish I could stay with you. It must be such an awful plague lying so."

"I can't tell you how I hate it," the boy said. "I pray every day that I mayn't have to go on doing it, now that Mr. Oswald says we may ask for anything we want that isn't wrong."

"What he used to tell us, when he was teaching us," Hubert answered, "was, that we may ask anything if we can say 'Thy will be done' about it. But it must be awfully hard to say it about this," he added; his warmest sympathy called out for a trial the worst, to his mind, that he could picture himself enduring. "Do you think Colonel Dennis would mind if I pulled the pillow just a little under your shoulders. You do look so very uncomfortable,—so flat!"

"No, no: he put it so! It isn't the being uncomfortable I mind, half so much as the doing nothing. Ah, Hu.: do you remember last year when you were talking about obedience to fathers? If it had been then, I should have been sitting half up, as soon as he was out of the room, and telling you I had a right to be comfortable in my own way. Your dear little Bible: how much I love it! Now that it has taught me *why* things are right, I can bear to do them. Where is it? Is it under my pillow? For I am just in the

middle of a very interesting chapter, which I want to finish when I may sit up again."

The very interesting chapter was discussed a few minutes; and then Hubert was again in the saddle. The spring wind blowing round them seemed to tempt his pony to a gallop; but he checked him at each start, and went leisurely up the road through the village; stopped more than once to answer inquiries after the Squire, till he came near the church stile.

"Master Hubert, you wanted an owl's egg, didn't you?" he heard a voice asking above him. Among the soft young leaves of the nearest lime tree, a merry face looked down at him. "If you do, I know where there's a nest."

"That we do, Ben," Hubert said, looking up eagerly. "Is it anywhere near? I could come with you now."

"I'll show you then," was the willing answer. And in a minute, the little fustian-clothed figure was on the ground at the pony's head, making the bridle fast to the stile. "Master Osbert will be mad with me for showing you instead of him. I was waiting for him now; but I'll be glad to pay him out."

"Why?" asked the other, following along the churchyard path.

"He and me fell out last week. He went and backed young Rowland's ferret instead of mine, he did, which he'd promised he would."

"Oh, be quiet: I don't want to hear anything about all that," Hubert said; and the boy looked round at him with a knowing wink, and led the way up the tower stairs. Mr. Raymond would have shuddered to see the places where the two boys climbed when they had passed through the belfry and were out on the tower roof; but the round white egg was stolen, and they stood again in safety examining their prize, Ben only regretting that they had not taken two.

"No: one is enough now," Hubert said. "We haven't much room in our box, we will double them next spring when we have a better; though Osbert will have to do it alone: I shall be off away there, then. Hurrah!" He

pointed as he spoke away to the horizon, where a streak like burnished steel gleamed through the misty air. "I wish it was nearer," he added, speaking half to himself; the pronoun applying quite as much to the mental as to the visible prospect before him.

"Is it to the sea you mean you will be away?" his companion asked. "Master Osbert told me it was him that was going now instead."

"What do you say?" Hubert asked sharply, "Osbert told you that folly! If he did, he has been gulling you. Fancy *him* going to sea!" he added, with a scornful laugh. "There is just as much idea of that as of my staying at home."

"Well, he did say he was thinking of going: and I want mother to let me go too; she says, if the captain would take me with him, I might. I can't bear schooling, and should like to go in a ship."

"You needn't think you would stop schooling, Ben. But if your mother would like you to go, I'll write to my uncle and tell him, and he would get you on to some good ship perhaps. You know he is away for three years, so there is no chance of your going with him. What made Osbert say that?" he asked, after a few minutes pause, rolling the round egg over and over in his hands meditatively, with his eyes still fixed on the fascinating shining horizon. "Why, my father would never dream of such a thing as to send us both away at once! What made him say it?"

"He didn't say both would go. It was that day when he was with Mr. Nevin's son and another boy, going rook shooting, and was just mad at your having seen him. He called you spy, and said he would like to spite you by asking the Squire to let him turn sailor instead of you."

"Oh, is that all?" said Hubert. "That's nothing! I must go on now." And he was soon again on his pony's back, and with a nod and "Thank you" to Ben, rode away home with the egg in his hand.

His knock at his father's door was unanswered, and he turned the handle gently and looked in, expecting to see a sleeping face upon the sofa pillow. But there was the sound of a voice in such unmistakable displeasure, that catching sight of Osbert's figure he shut the door more quickly than he had opened it, and took his way to the library. His writing and learning went on with many pauses for meditation between. Ben's communication rested in his mind, causing a worried feeling, though he hardly knew why.

"Hubert, you appear to me to be dreaming with more diligence than working."

Mr. Maynard was the only other occupant of the room, and sat in the armchair apparently reading, but Hubert looking across at him now and then, saw, as he had seen many times during the few days since their return, that his book had sunk in his hand and that his eyes were fixed.

"I have only my French grammar to learn now," Hubert said, rising and coming round to his tutor's side, kneeling by him as he stirred the fire. "How cold you look, sir," he said, slipping his hand over the one lying on Mr. Maynard's knee, "and feel too."

"I have been out walking since finishing with Osbert, and the wind is chill," he answered, as the warm firm fingers were drawn under the shrunken bony ones.

"Do you think so? It felt so jolly and soft to me! We had a capital ride. I have got an owl's egg at last."

"Spring time suits all young life," the tutor answered. "Where did you find the nest?"

The boy told him, then asked, "Mr. Maynard, have you ever heard 'Bert say anything about wanting to go to sea? Ben says he does, and that he says too instead of me: fancy that!"

"And a most trouble-saving arrangement it would be for everyone if he did."

"I never heard of such nonsense," cried Hubert. "Oh,

Mr. Maynard," he said, earnestly, squeezing his hand, "promise me that you won't say so to papa. It would be no saving of trouble to me, I can tell you, if such a notion got into his head!"

"Surely not, surely not: it is none of my business. You have been dedicated to the sea from infancy, and though I think it a most grievous mistake, I believe you would be unfitted now for anything else; unless indeed—" and there was a minute's pause,—“unless indeed you could become yourself convinced now that you are more fitted for better things. Your powers are above the average, Hubert, and you may be wise yet to pause and think again: there is nothing in the profession you have chosen to—”

"How can you say 'better things,' Mr. Maynard?" Hubert interrupted him hotly. "If I have better brains than some boys, hadn't Rodney and Collingwood, to make them what they are, the glory of England, just as much, if not ten times more, than Pitt and Burleigh? I know you think that one can never be anything great in it, and that greatness must be in learning or getting into Parliament. Now I consider it greater to be an English Admiral than to be Prime Minister, and if you do think there is not much chance of my being one, I tell you I would rather be a plain Post Captain to the end of my days than be Lord Chancellor."

"Oh, yes: I know all that," said the tutor, with a smile. "You are only thirteen now; you may think more as I do when your years more nearly approach to mine."

"Uncle doesn't."

"He is a born sailor; you are only a dedicated one."

"Mr. Maynard, you will put me in a rage if you talk like that. What difference in life is there in us?"

"Just the difference which made me say, when I had known Oswald—your uncle—for a month, and heard that the navy was his destination, 'The very thing for him!' and which, when I had had you under my charge for the same

time, and knew the same about you, made me say, 'What a sad waste!'"

Looking up at him in surprised wonder, Hubert said, "I don't understand what you mean: and nothing can be a waste given to the navy."

"A Milton, or a Sir Isaac Newton, for instance?"

"Thank goodness, you have scolded me often enough about my work to make me feel quite sure I am not depriving the world of a second of either of those two old gentlemen," the boy said, laughing. "'Bert is more likely to do that if he were to go: you always say he beats me hollow at work."

"In work, yes; but in powers and natural gifts, no. However, it is no good discussing the subject, as I do not suppose my opinion will weigh one feather's weight with you in the matter."

"No: it wouldn't be true to say it would. 'Bert may talk as he likes, but nothing will ever have the faintest power to make me change; and papa's promise makes me safe with him. If uncle and I hadn't that to hold him to it, I am morally certain he would say I shouldn't now."

"You are right there, I think."

"And you wish he could, don't you?" said the boy, laughing.

"I do wish Osbert could go instead."

"Well, he can't, then! Now, if you say anything to papa about it I'll never forgive you; for go to sea I will, and nothing in heaven or earth shall stop me."

"Hush, Hubert!" said the tutor, solemnly. "*I will* is a dangerous word to use, and one I tremble to hear spoken by a young mouth, and in that tone. I believe there is one thing on earth, that is to say if I know you rightly, which could stop you; there are certainly many things in heaven which could."

Hubert looked up at him with questioning eyes, but said nothing; he had no wish to hear of any possible stumbling

blocks in his chosen path. That such might arise seemed a truth, seen for the first time, as the sound of his own self-willed words in his ears recalled that of the submissive voice he had listened to so short a time before, and the thought of the prostrate figure by which he had been standing. "But, nonsense: why should anything happen to me?" he said to himself. "Nothing ever has, and I am as strong as a horse." He would not even try to answer the half-formed question. "If anything did, could I feel about it as Harry can? It is just as great nonsense worrying myself about anything stopping my going to sea as stopping my going to bed: it is a settled thing, and must be."

"If there were anything, Mr. Maynard," he said at last, "and if it could stop me, like breaking my leg, or anything, it would just break my heart, too, that is all I know."

The tutor looked at him amused. "Would it?" Then added more gravely. "Oh, no: you would find when the blow came that you could live on very well; though a bad bruise or crushing is a good deal worse pain than a break. However, I don't see that you need anticipate either. Now, this is not learning your grammar, and French will be one of your examination subjects. Your father gave me the list the other day, just before he was taken ill; your uncle had sent it to him. You must pass well for my credit's sake." His tutor did not think it necessary to raise another outcry by telling him that Mr. Raymond had stated his wish, when giving the paper, that both boys should be equally coached up in the subjects mentioned, "in case," as he said, "of any change of plan." "Now, go back to your seat and finish: you will have no time with your father now before tea."

"I did go to him. I meant to do some of my lessons upstairs in his room; but 'Bert was in there catching it. What has he been doing?"

"Only going on at his old games; and I had to let your father know."

"Then you have seen him?"

"No, not yet: Dr. Scott thought it wiser not. I wrote to him."

"Dear me," and Hubert turned to resume his work: "he'll be safe for a headache!"

"I fear so. And if he wants you in the evening never mind about coming down: illness must be an excuse for wasted time sometimes. Of course I can trust you; only if you think yourself needed for his comfort."

"You may be sure I shan't shirk, sir: I like my Friday evenings alone with you too well." Like them as he might, however, he saw as soon as he made his second attempt at paying his visit that he would have to give it up for that day. His father was dozing: the patches of colour in his cheeks, and the swollen veins of his hands, telling, as plainly as his restless motions and muttered words, of pain and uneasiness of mind. "Oh, how I do wish he would get strong and well again!" he thought to himself, with a new strength of desire. He thought he was only grieved for his father; but an anxiety and restless feeling of fear for himself, which he did not look at nor acknowledge, was taking possession of him and giving its own added sting to the other plainly understood uneasiness. He had stood thinking for some time, leaning against the mantel-piece watching him, as deeper sleep was overpowering the restlessness, when a creeping light-falling foot crossed the carpet, and the next minute arms were round his neck, and a soft cheek laid on his head: the firelight glancing on the ringed fingers told him who it was.

Maude was not given to much caressing, and he wondered at the fond action, while returning it by kissing her hand.

"He looks worse again to-night: doesn't he?" he said, low. "When he moans like that I always know."

"Yes," she answered. "I was afraid he would be tired, for May told me he had had Osbert up for a talking to before tea; and I came up to see how he was. I didn't

know you were here. How strange it is how young he looks when he lies like that! He looks nearly as young as Oswald. It is having that bright coloured hair, and the feverish look in his cheeks," she added, bending forward, as their father turned restlessly, murmuring, "Oh, don't, Oswald."

"Uncle being so much darker," Hubert said, "and out in all weathers, makes him look older."

A sigh of longing for him would have been his next sentence, but that he felt his listener would hardly have sympathized. He was surprised the minute after to hear her say, speaking his very thought, "Don't I just wish he would come home again: there is no one now to do anything."

"If he had been here he would have given that wretch Osbert a good rowing, and something more, too, and never let poor daddy know a word about it," Hubert said, indignantly. "It is bothers like that that make him like this. I can't bear seeing him look so."

"Oh, Hu., Hu.! what am I to do?" his sister said, suddenly, in a tone of bitter distress, squeezing him round as she stood behind him. "Oh, I am so miserable! and I have no one to help me."

"What is it, Maude? Don't cry. Can I help you?" He turned round, putting his arm round her waist. "You have been unhappy ever since I have been back."

"It will kill papa, if I speak to him. Oh, if mamma were but here, or even Oswald!"

The lament for "mamma" always brought a lump into Hubert's throat; but he said, quickly, "You must not cry, Maude; you will wake him: he is moving again."

They stayed silent a few minutes; and then Maude said, with a smothered sob, "Hu., it seems ridiculous to be coming to you, a boy of your age; but there is not a soul in the house besides that I can speak to; and you can manage him," with a glance at the sofa.

"There is Miss Sturt, or May," said Hubert: "can't you talk to them?"

"Good little Miss Sturt, indeed! no: and as to May, she is a child.

"Then, what am I?"

"Not like May; and papa's favourite." Paying no heed to Hubert's protestation against the use of the objectionable word, she hurried on, "You are my only hope. I must get what I want; and I must not—will not hurt him. Will you stand by me, and help me; and make him like what I am going to tell you?"

"Write to aunt Kate, Maude: she is the one to help you, if there is anything making you unhappy. Were you crying about that in the park the other day?"

"She knows all about it, already. It all happened at Florence, when we were all together there." Maude spoke lower than before, her words disconnected, and her voice shaking with agitation; and her brother had some difficulty in catching her meaning as her story went on. It ended with, "We were all so happy; though it was last June. But I had grown used to the miserable feeling of what we had lost; and I was just strong again after my illness; and it was such lovely weather, and everything so gay: I could not keep on being sad. They tempted me out to walk, and ride; and were all so kind. Ah, Hu., I wish you knew him! And then before I knew, nearly,—we were engaged."

"Oh, Maude," Hubert gasped: "and you never told papa! Wasn't that very wrong?"

"But I meant to, Hu., indeed I did," she said earnestly, tears again choking her voice; "but how could I tell him I had been thinking of such things, then? And then he begged me not to write, because he wanted to come and speak for himself, and Aunt Kate sometimes said she would too; but she never did, because she said it would break up our party, and then he had to be away six months in St. Petersburg. He came the other day, Hu., the day you

and Mr. Maynard went away, but papa was so ill I was obliged to tell him he could not see him."

"Well, Maude, I can't understand how you could keep such a thing from him: he will be very angry."

"Oh, I can't think how to tell him! I nearly did when I first came home, he was so kind and loving; but Oswald stopped me whenever I felt tempted, for I knew he would have been dead against us at once."

"Why should you think that?" said Hubert quickly. "He would have been the one to help you."

"Just before he went away I began to think he would, but I was afraid of him."

Unconsciously they had been raising their voices in their eagerness, and Hubert glancing, as his sister spoke, towards the sofa, saw the dark eyes open, and fixed on his face. Touching Maude's hand to silence her, he moved towards his father, as he asked dreamily, "Who is it you are afraid of, my dear?" Without answering she hurried from the room, leaving Hubert to say, "You look enough to frighten one now, papa: you make me think of Red Riding Hood's question, 'What have you got such big eyes for?'"

His father smiled, saying, "Glad to be able to give the wolf's reply, 'To see you with.' Where have you been all day? Let us have more light. I have slept longer than I meant, and shall toss about half the night in consequence."

"You must take some of the doctor's stuff to help you," Hubert said, turning up the lamp and moving about nervously, unwilling to sit down and meet his father's look, with the painful consciousness of the knowledge he had just gained.

"Have you and Maude been here long?"

"No: not very. I am afraid our talking woke you?"

"What were you so interested about: have you a letter from Uncle? I thought I heard his name."

"No, papa: Maude was telling me about her time abroad."

"I fancied she did not much like talking about that,"

Mr. Raymond said, "except to compare notes of places with me. I was fearing she was fretting after all she had left, and found home more dull than she liked to say."

Hubert made no answer, busying himself with the fire, and his father went on after a little: "Poor child, it must be more of a change than I have rightly considered for her. I fancied somehow she would have returned to mother you, but she is—"

The sentence was left unfinished, and Hubert, to lead away from the subject, began a history of his afternoon's doings, and that done they were silent for a time.

"Hu., my boy, what is that heavy sigh for?"

Hubert started, saying, "I think I may ask you the same."

"And I have no difficulty in finding the answer. Alas, I am at my wit's end about that boy Osbert, and can think of no way to check the evil, for any permanence. It troubles me terribly. He cries at displeasure, but is plainly bent on his own will, and I fear Mr. Maynard's punishments fall too lightly. I tell him if he goes on like this I will have in the coachman next time."

"Oh, papa!"

"Well, something must be done; this continual anxiety about him is most wearing. Directly your tutor and you are safe out of the way, and I shut up here, there he is. It is only a mercy that Foster and Marks are such true friends as well as servants, or no one knows where it would end; the next thing will be my poor little Godfrey led astray. Foster says he heard him using language to his dog that horrified him, and where can he have learnt it but from Osbert?"

"Papa, don't think about it any more: you are making your head worse again." Hubert seated himself on the edge of the sofa as he spoke. "Should you mind Godfrey riding with me alone sometimes now? I'll get him away from 'Bert. He rides quite well since Uncle gave him

lessons : he can only have been with him while I was away."

"Never shall I endure to part with you again,—the one comfort and dependence that I can rest on."

The vice-like pressure on his hand seemed to say the same, and the boy's heart stood still a moment. Then he said briskly, "It is no good your saying that, you know, papa. Should you mind letting Osbert go to school?" he asked, after a pause.

"That is just what Mr. Maynard proposes. He writes very kindly, saying I am not to consider him in the matter ; that he would take Godfrey in his place at once, and then when—if he were not wanted for you, he would leave."

"Oh, no !" cried Hubert : "couldn't he go on teaching Godfrey alone when I go, till Jack is old enough ?"

"No, certainly not : it would be wasting money to retain such a man for little children ; and though, of course, Godfrey must soon be under a man's care, I should have some younger, lighter-hearted man, who would go about with him and look after him out of doors as well as in."

Hubert sat staring before him, rubbing his chin, and Mr. Raymond lay and watched him.

"What would your tutor do, think you, if he left us ?" he asked at last.

"I can't imagine," said the boy, gravely. "I suppose he would find some other boys to teach. How horrid for him ! I don't think he has anybody in the world he cares for now ; no one came to his little girl's funeral, though I asked him if there weren't anyone I should write to for him, but he said, No. He said he wanted no one but me," Hubert added, with a softened look, as the thought of those days came back.

"You have won a place in his heart, poor man," Mr. Raymond said, "as much as he has in your's, I think. You may read what he says if you like. I put the letter inside that book : give it to me. There, the first is all

about Osbert, which you needn't see; you can read from there, the top of the third page."

Hubert took the letter, and going back to his seat read where his father had folded it: "Now that this occasion has made it necessary for me to trouble you with a communication from myself, I cannot let the opportunity pass without using it to convey to you my heartfelt thanks for your kindness in sparing him to me in my time of need. I am not a man of many words, and none that I could employ could tell the comfort, and comfort of the only sort I could receive, which he brought me in the midst of bitter suffering. He is a gentleman in his delicacy of feeling and unobtrusiveness, and a Christian in his thoughtful, self-forgetful kindness. Again repeating my thanks for your permission given to him at a time when I fear it caused inconvenience to yourself, and hoping that your health will be fully restored shortly, believe me, your's sincerely, John Maynard."

"I don't think you ought to have shown me that, papa: I am sure he never meant me to see it," Hubert said, handing the letter back.

His father looked up at him smiling. "You think as he does, that praise is not a wholesome thing, eh?" he asked, touching his glowing cheek. "It is pleasant to read of another, however, I can tell you. Now will you read to me a little before I go back to bed?"

That night when Hubert lay down himself, it was with a mind ill at ease, and his pillow was wet with tears before he slept. He hardly knew why they came; and though he questioned, as he tossed about, "What can be the matter with me?" he had no intention of finding a reply more than was given by his vexed grumble: "I just wish everybody would do right, and mind their own business, and leave me alone." The petition which Maude had pressed upon him vehemently, before they separated for the night, was adding much to his perplexity.

"He writes to me that he is coming here again, in a day or two, for he must be off to Russia again in about a month; he has a post there under his Government. And he says he must see papa this time, and will not go away without; for we must go to St. Petersburg together. Will you manage to get papa to see him without being worried?"

Hubert groaned. "Oh, Maude: to think of your dreaming of being married, and going away from him, and all of us, in such a hurry! How can I help you do what will make papa miserable?"

But she crushed all his objections with the argument he could find no answer for. "There are some things fathers must bear: they must bear to part with their daughters to be married, just as they must with their favo —, their very-much-loved sons to go to sea: eh, mustn't they?"

"Yes, to be sure: that is true," Hubert admitted, and gave the promise of help, for which she asked.



CHAPTER XIV.

FEARS GROWING.

"Let me not think an action my own way,
But as Thy love shall sway ;
Resigning up the rudder to Thy skill."

HOPEFULNESS and merry-heartedness resumed their places with the spring morning light ; and it was hard for Hubert to believe in the strange fit of dismal depression of the night before. His brother's face, bright with restored good humour, as he sat up in bed descanting on some plan for the Saturday half holiday, helped to forgetfulness of past causes of angry feeling ; and even Maude's story seemed less oppressive. She had been "awfully cowardly," certainly, and seemed to him still "horribly selfish;" but, as she had said, it was not a thing he could understand about. And, after all, it was possible that she cared for this Monsieur le Comte de "Something" as much as he did for "Uncle." So he meditated, with his head between his hands, answering Osbert between whiles.

The welcome announcement from Foster that "Master" had passed a much better night, and would get up earlier, was received with more than usual delight, as he ran downstairs. The few minutes spent, according to his custom now, in his uncle's room, were spent in prayer made earnest by anxiety, that no harm might come to his father, and that he might be taught what to do wisely ; for though he had determined to help his sister, how to do it was not a

question easily settled. His prayer that morning ended, for the first time in his life, with the petition, "And give me what I want." The words were vague; but even so, expressed, he half regretted, as he rose from his knees, that the request had passed his lips. "Why ask for what was already as good as his?" The words gave a kind of form to the uneasiness of the previous night. He stood holding the handle of the door, pondering again before leaving the room. After all, what had happened that need make him uncomfortable? Nothing, to make the slightest change to himself. Osbert's ideas about going to sea, whether to spite him, or for his own pleasure, were nonsensical, only as foolish as many other things he said and did. If Maude did marry and go away, what change would that make? He had never really succeeded in getting her to be much with his father,—and no wonder, indeed,—was the next thought. I wonder she dared look him in the face. Then as to Mr. Maynard's croaking: I have known all along that he thought uncle and me two idiots for our choice, so that is nothing new. And if papa does feel worse about it, and speak out more about his disliking my going, I have known that too for the last year; and he can't stop me. Fathers must bear parting with their children, as Maude very truly says: they can't stay at home for ever. After all, what is the good of bothering about it? And with that final question, the handle was turned, and solitude and his meditation left behind.

Breakfast was just over that morning when the letters were brought down from Mr. Raymond's room, and stopped the dispersion of the party.

"Master says, will you open your's at once, Master Hubert? He thinks, as it is so thick, there may be one inside for him."

"Does he think I am going to keep it in my pocket, Foster? No: tell him it is every line for myself. I'll come and read him the news in a few minutes."

"And if you please, Miss Raymond," the man went on, turning to Maude, who had held her share in her hand without opening it, "will you please to see how Mrs. Maxwell is? And I am to go back and say."

"Oh, Maude: is aunt Kate worse?" May cried, as her sister tore the envelope of a London marked letter, and turned suddenly white.

"I haven't had time to see yet," she said, following Hubert into the deep window where he was already devouring his well-filled sheets. "She is much better, Fostèr, say; and is to leave town on Monday for Hastings."

The next minute a small piece torn from a letter hid the writing under Hubert's eyes; and after a glance of surprised inquiry at his sister, who leaned against the window, trembling, he made out with considerable difficulty the few words witten very finely upon it. Their being French added to his trouble; but he understood their meaning at last, and no longer wondered at his sister's white face.

"I am pained to inconvenience you, and Monsieur, your father; but I am constrained to set off to Paris at the beginning of the week after next, and it is necessary that I see him before I go. I fear our departure to Russia may be hastened. I will be with you on Monday, by the same train as last time; and I will not leave again without speaking to Mr. Raymond."

"And if Mr. Raymond refused to see him: what then?" asked Hubert, staring indignantly at the words. "Oh, Maude, what shall we do? Why need a man write with a pen like a pin? Just look at uncle's by his!" But Maude was gone, and he finished his letter; and then, with a sudden "I know what I'll do," ran away to his father's room.

That afternoon Dr. Scott, paying his visit, found his patient established on the drawing-room sofa, in a sunny window, and Hubert writing at the table.

"Now, haven't I been clever, getting him in here?" he said, as the Doctor shook hands. "I remembered what

you said about the study; though it was very difficult to prevent him trying another flight of stairs."

His father smiled. "Hubert seems to connect the study and my illness together. I should have been securer from bustle down there. But the stairs were alarming."

"And Hubert was quite right. I never meant you to return to that dismal room yet awhile. You could not be better off than here."

"And he will be able to see people now?" said the boy, looking up doubtfully at the Doctor; "though nurse was angry with me for saying so."

The answer was comforting to him; though his father's was a decided "Oh, no." "You are quite right. See friends by all means: not too many. Nothing is worse for you than the way you have been living."

Hubert, well satisfied with his success so far, gathered his things together and left them.

The quiet Sunday passed away uneasily enough for him; Maude's restlessness and visible anxiety infecting him, and making him glad to seek a refuge at O'Hara's side from the sight of one sister, and the speculations as to what could be the matter with her of the other. He would thankfully have escaped in the same way from the afternoon lessons, when Monday came. Every sound distracted his thoughts, and repeated rebuke was the consequence. It was very hard to feel interested in the Punic wars with a possible French brother-in-law now close at hand. There was a ring at the front bell, some question asked and answered, and Foster's softly-shod feet crossing the hall, followed by a man's boots; then steps mounting the stairs.

"Hubert, you have not answered my question. What celebrated man perished in the siege of Syracuse?"

"Jugurtha," Hubert answered, with his head on one side, listening eagerly.

A laugh from Osbert, and the sharp order from the tutor, "Take your slate to the other table and write a sketch of

the principal events of the second Punic war," recalled his thoughts.

"Oh, no: I know, sir! It was the man about the screw. What was his name?"

"Do as I tell you. You are being thoroughly inattentive. Read on, Osbert."

It was later than usual before he was free; and then it was only to rush to the drawing-room door, and stop there, with the sudden consciousness of the very scrubby wild appearance he would present. Voices sounded within; and curiosity conquering his fear of being seen, he turned the handle, and looked in. His father was sitting by the fire, looking up, laughing at something his companion was saying, as he stood before him, handing him a cup of coffee from a table near him. Of the stranger, all the satisfaction the boy's curiosity could gain was the sight of his back, and the sound of a pleasant voice asking, "*Est-ce assez?*" as the cream was added to the coffee. The three words were quite enough to cause the speedy closing of the door; and Hubert turned in time to face his sister, as she came downstairs.

"You needn't be afraid, Maude," he said, cheeringly: "they are as friendly as possible, and enjoying their coffee together, as if they had seen each other twenty times before. Where have you been?"

"I could bear the waiting no longer," she said, "and I went out. Has he been here long?"

"Some time. I should think papa must have been having good practice for his French. What can they have had to talk about?"

"He has been staying with Aunt Kate, you know, in town," Maude said; and raising her head walked quietly into the room.

His father's bright cheerfulness, as he tended him to his room that night, showed Hubert that he was still in ignorance of the cause of the arrival of his afternoon visitor.

"A very pleasing, gentlemanly man," was the comment upon him. "I should like to be able to ask him to dinner: he says he is staying at Canworth for a few days. I wish I were up to it,—more so as he seems a particular friend of your aunt's, Mrs. Maxwell; and Maude says he was with them a great deal in Florence. I have asked him to come over and have a ride to-morrow. I wonder when I shall be fit for the saddle again. What do you say to a drive in the pony carriage to-morrow, eh Hu., and pay the Doctor a visit?"

"He would stare at the sight of you, papa; but it would do you good now, I think. It is jolly to see you looking like yourself again. I hope the Monsieur will come every day, if he doesn't ask me to talk to him."

There was every prospect of his wish being gratified he found during the week, though without the continuance of the result he had rejoiced in for his father. Dark lines under his eyes, silence and languor, showed Hubert next evening that all was known,—all but the length of the engagement, which Maude commanded him urgently never to speak of. He wondered that day after day went by, and still his father said nothing to him; though he waited on him with redoubled care, seeing the marks of anxiety and trouble in his face, and knowing that much letter writing and sleepless nights were doing away with the added strength so lately gained.

Meanwhile his sister was radiant, telling him he was making trouble out of nothing. She saw nothing amiss, except that, of course, he was a little upset with the suddenness of it all; and Hubert felt too indignant with her to ask if anything had been settled, and if their father had given his consent.

"Hu., my son, Maude tells me you know about all this," was Mr. Raymond's greeting on the next Sunday evening as the boy came into his room.

"Yes, papa: I wish you weren't so worried."

"It is a great grief in many ways: I am very troubled about it." His eyes were sadder than ever, and his whole look one of thorough dejection.

"Then you have said, Yes?"

"I have said neither Yes nor No; but they seem so decided about it themselves I don't think my consent is much needed. It is what I should never have thought of, and what your mother would never have allowed. But I see nothing for it: they seem to have settled it between them. You know he is a Romanist."

"Yes, papa; but he came to Church to-day, and perhaps Maude may teach him better."

Mr. Raymond smiled sadly and shook his head. "I doubt Maude's powers of teaching." A heavy sigh followed. "To lose her at all is terrible enough, and to—Russia. If I had meant to say No I ought to have said so at once: that is the truth. But the man took me all by surprise, and never seemed to doubt my approving. Your aunt speaks most highly of him, and is urgent for the marriage, and all my inquiries have been answered satisfactorily; but to think of my Maude marrying a Frenchman and a Romanist. How Oswald will hoot at me! But she is set on it. I did think she would have cared to bring some comfort home before thinking of this, with so many little ones and no one competent at their head."

His groaning sigh was painful to hear, and his son, looking at him, said, "Papa, tell her she must stay at home now, and wait till he comes home from Russia. Oh, do papa!" he added, with sudden eagerness. "She has no right to make you unhappy."

"No, Hubert: I could never compel a child of mine to sacrifice her happiness to mine, nor retain her bodily presence by force, while her love and thought were given elsewhere: but it is a strange requital for the love and care of nineteen years. Catch me letting another child of mine go from under my care, if twenty aunts ask it." There was

a long pause, and Hubert sat silent till the sadly spoken words, "I should feel differently about it if I knew it for her best happiness," showed that his thoughts had been still busy with the same subject; and Hubert said, trying to speak cheerfully, "She looks as if she were sure it was."

"And she tells me she is sure it is. I am not superstitious, but I cannot believe a blessing could follow such a marriage so entered upon, with the first and most sacred of duties thrust aside for its sake. But it is not fair to your sister to be speaking of her like this to you, my boy. I forget sometimes who you are, and it is a relief to speak once in a while, instead of this constant loneliness of thought. She is young and eager, dear child, and it is not fair to judge her hardly. Certainly he is particularly pleasing, and it is a good marriage in every point but those I feel most sensitive about. If I could but know what was right to do! To see my child cease to be an Englishwoman and a Protestant,—for that is what it will end in: I declare I could feel it in my heart to envy poor Maynard!"

"Oh, papa, how can you say so?"

"I mean it, Hu.: it would be easier to bear than this. His child has not left him voluntarily; and to see change in one fondly loved, to feel this bitterness of disappointment added to loss, is worse than a loss though for all life, with hope of the time when she will be found again. But how shall I know my child again," he went on, hurriedly, "after years of Frenchness and fashionable life, with worldliness and Romanism added, have done their work? What will her mother say? The precious, fair little one she brought to meet me: our first,—and ah, how loved! I had been away, looking after the West Indian properties, and she was a month old when she laid her in my arms,—dear wee darling! I can see it all as if it were yesterday."

His lip was trembling, and Hubert drew near to him, saying, "Papa, send Monsieur away, and tell Maude she must stay at home. You shan't be bothered like this: it

makes me mad to see you made unhappy by her." This uncovering of other causes of grief than those he had thought of, troubled Hubert greatly, and he began to repent of the sympathy he had shown his sister, and of the little help he had rendered her, as he held his father's arm and looked up into his face. How would it be when the same look was there again, brought there by himself, and he far away? Who would stand by him then, and listen to his mourning? Would it be May, or Osbert? No: his father would never forget who they were, and speak his thoughts aloud to them; no, he would stand there alone,—wife, daughter, son, all having left him! It was not a thought to be dwelt on. "Papa, won't you send him away?" he repeated, pressing closer to him.

"I have been doing it again, you see, Hu.: talking out my man's griefs to trouble your boy's head," Mr. Raymond said, smoothing his hair. "And you will miss her yourself, if she goes, I am afraid: she has been your companion latterly a good deal."

"For me, of course, that doesn't matter much, as, in a few months, I shall not need her."

Hubert spoke steadily, looking into his father's eyes. What made him say such words then, with that hard cruel indifference to the pain he knew he gave, as the eyes were instantly turned away? He hardly knew; but he knew he felt glad that he had said something to prove to himself that about his own future it was just as it had always been. It was foolish to compare himself and his sister. What he should do, when he left his father, would be a right thing; what she was doing was a wrong one.

"Now, my son, it is time for you to say Good night. Of course, you won't say anything to your sister of my spoken thoughts."

Hubert went upstairs slowly, with the feeling of uneasiness, that had been troubling him all the week, increased to positive pain. He would not face its cause. But as he

came to Oswald's name in his prayer that night, the tears gathered in his eyes, and the instant determination was made to begin another letter to him at once. "That is the best way of curing this horrid feeling," he said to himself.

It was on a calm misty morning, grey and sunless, a few weeks afterwards, that the Park carriage stood at the church door; and a little congregation was gathered within, listening to the reading of the Marriage Service. A few friends, the house servants, and a sprinkling of villagers, who had learned what was going forward, was all that formed it, outside the circle of brothers and sisters surrounding Maude, as she knelt for a moment, ready to give herself away from them all; and a stranger stood within the Communion rails.

It was a curious kind of wedding for the eldest daughter of the big house,—so the village gossips whispered. But Maude had insisted that no fuss should be made: she had given trouble enough already with the need for haste, and she would not have her last weeks spoilt by bustling preparation for signs of a rejoicing which no one felt. Maxwell protested it was a great shame to cut them out of all the fun; and little Minnie loudly bemoaned herself, as she saw her visions of bridesmaid dignity fade away, not appreciating, as Godfrey did, Osbert's consolation: "Well, we shall have the cake and champagne all the same." Aunt Kate, who had joined them a few days before, declared it was marrying her favourite niece as if they were ashamed of her. But Maude was firm; while May muttered in the background, what sounded to Hubert, "Perhaps we are."

He was wondering now, as they stood together under the east window, whether her object now it was attained was bringing her most pain or gladness. She looked very calm and still in her white draperies, only glancing up once, with a look of pain at her father, as, after speaking his two words, he drew back from her side, to gain the support of a pillar

for the rest of the service. The bridegroom's satisfaction there was no mistaking ; and Hubert's feelings towards him were not those of a brother, as he listened to him repeating his French vows, and answering the questions asked him, trusting more to the translated Prayer-book, with which they had taken the precaution to provide him, than to their clergyman uncle's leading voice.

The long journey had been delayed till the latest day ; and none were sorry that the last words had to be exchanged over a hurried luncheon. Maude's farewell was taken of her father in his study : he could not see her go, he said ; and the rest were silent ones, her voice too strangled with sobs to allow of speaking. She hurried through them ; while her husband waited near the carriage door, ready to hand her in. Hubert stood near him, to gain the last Good-bye. Soon Maude's arms were close round his neck, with a whispered, " My darling Hu. ! " while his lips were against her cheek. " Hu., I can never thank you ! " the words were murmured in his ear. " All I can hope for you is, that you won't feel as bad as I do when your turn comes for going." Some kind words said about his being, perhaps, ordered to the Baltic for his first voyage, and her soon seeing him again, were finished with a decided " Il faut partir, ma Mathilde," and, with a long kiss, she turned ; while Hubert, with his hands clenched, flew up the steps, and hid himself in the library, till the sound of the departing wheels was over.

He got up then, and went into the dining-room, in search of the slice of cake set aside for O'Hara, and was soon finding solace for his sorrow at his side. The two boys loved each other with a love unlike children : it was a deep affection, strengthened with that tincturing of esteem, which gave it the character of the love which is usually only exchanged in later years ; and once established in his corner, he put aside for a time his sorrow, and all vexing thoughts. Geraldine had gone with the Park party to take

some cake and a bottle of champagne to the bailiff; and Hubert knew that once in his little sitting-room, they would not soon be allowed to leave it.

"And what have you been doing?" he asked, when the subject of the wedding had been exhausted.

"Oh, lessons with my father; and then I have been lying flat, as usual. But he says I may be up for two hours to-day, as you are all coming."

"Is that all?" cried Hubert, marvelling at the rejoicing tone over such a boon.

"Oh, I was up while I was at lessons, of course. To be sure, you haven't been here for three days. Dr. Scott is worse than ever since last Saturday. I believe he would like me to lie down all day. I think I must be getting lazy; for, somehow, I don't think I do mind it quite so much as I did at first."

There was a quiet cheerfulness in his tone; and Hubert looked at him with a sort of envy at his content, as he lay with his hands folded across him, his whole form as still as though asleep.

"Harry, how can you bear it?" he asked impatiently. "It makes me feel as if I wanted to push you, and make you move, even to look at you: it would kill me!"

The child laughed. "I daresay it would, really; but you see I've come to this gradually. I used long ago to sit in a chair often. No: I really do not mind it as I did, and I can't help thinking sometimes it is happening to me as Mr. Oswald said in one letter, that sometimes God answers our prayers about a bad thing, not by taking it away, but by making us happy in bearing it. You remember how the Lord in the garden was answered: it was only by the angel coming and strengthening Him; the soldiers came all the same."

"Harry, you are much more good than I shall ever be," Hubert said abruptly, leaving his seat and walking restlessly about the room. "I could never bear to feel like that,—

to grow to be contented even, without what one wanted, would be hateful."

His face was clouded again as he spoke hotly, and O'Hara, seeing no reason for his vehemence, only said simply, "No, Hu.: I am not good at all. But I cannot help hoping that God helps me to feel more right when I really want to."

"Yes: of course," Hubert said; adding half to himself, "because you really want to."

"What did you say?" asked the child. Then, seeing the troubled look in his face: "But never mind. Don't begin thinking of poor Miss Raymond again. I read the Marriage Service through this morning to see what you were all doing. I never had before."

"Did you?" said Hubert, absently.

"I looked out in your Bible all the verses they read, and in one in Ephesians you have marked a reference I was so glad to find. Give me the Bible, Hu., and I'll show you. See, here it is: you have written Isaiah xlv. 5 against it. Find that for me, will you? It ends about taking the new surname. I suppose that was why you marked it: because it is like being married."

"I remember when I did that," Hubert said, turning up to the prophets, "we had been doing some lessons for uncle about the types of Christ. He had been talking about this verse a few evenings before at prayers, and I wanted to show him how like it was to what St. Paul said about the Church being like the bride of Christ." He sat staring at the words, and remembering the Sunday evening when he had heard them first, and the tone of the voice reading, "One shall say, I am the Lord's;" while the soft continuous sound of O'Hara's talking seemed far away, as he went on to relate how the verse reminded him of such an interesting story which Mr. Oswald had told him last winter, about a Roman officer, in the days of Diocletian, who became a Christian. "And he had done as the early Christians did, and marked his arm with the first letter of

the name of Christ when he was baptized ; and though he kept it hidden for a long time, it was seen one day by an enemy of his when he was at the bath, and he told of him. Then, afterwards, he was taken prisoner, and when he refused to give up being a Christian, they told him he should not be a soldier any more, but be disgraced, and made a slave, unless he would sacrifice to the gods. He had hoped they would have killed him, but to go on living with all his happiness taken from him seemed too bad to bear ; to change, too, from being a soldier and a noble, and living as the grand Romans did, to being a slave, and work for a master, and have to obey him. He was sitting one day on the floor of his prison, just the evening before he was to be taken before the judge again, and he was moving the ring of the chain round his wrist, when a ray of sunlight shone through the slit in the wall,—that was the only window there was,—and fell just on the letter on his arm. It seemed to him like the finger of God pointing to it, and reminding him, ‘You are mine.’ He thought of the day of his baptism, and of the white robe he had worn, the sign of the holiness of the followers of Jesus, and he repeated out loud once more the vow he had made that day. They carried him before the judges next day, and when they tried to frighten him into changing, he only answered, ‘The Lord Christ is my Master, I cannot disobey Him. He has bought me with His life : I am His.’”

“And what did they do ?” asked Hubert.

“They sold him, as they said they would ; first branding him upon the forehead, that he might never again be able to be what he had been, even if he were freed.”

“And then what happened to him ?”

“I don’t know. I don’t think Mr. Oswald finished ; but you see it was so many centuries ago, we know he must have been hundreds of years in heaven now. And how glad he must be that the ray of sunshine reminded him in time. I never could find that verse before, about marking

the hand, though Mr. Oswald did show it to me. He explained to me, too, all about taking the new name, just as Miss Raymond has taken the French Count's this morning, when she promised to love and obey him. How I do wish he would come home again, he tells such interesting stories. It used to be such a treat when he came and sat with me, when Gerry was up at the Park with May. Ah, here comes Mrs. Wibmer! She says I must have on my best coat to-night."

"And so you shall. It is not so very often he has company to tea, dear lamb."

The tall old woman lifted her helpless charge, and Hubert sat on alone with the little book open upon his knee. Thought chased thought through his head, while his eyes were fixed on the words which so many months ago had fastened themselves in his mind. He pictured to himself the Roman soldier in the white dress of the newly baptized, standing upon the brink of some tree-shaded river, looking forward to possible martyrdom, and vowing love and obedience to the Lord, whose name he had just received. How glad he must have been to mark the sign upon his arm; as glad as I was that day that I did mine, and as Maude looked at her ring. And yet it is just that that is carrying her away now, crying, from everything she has loved all her life, for the sake of what she has suddenly grown to love more. It is just the same for her as it was for the Roman: first loving, then a new name, then a sign to remind of it, and then obedience. How I hated to see her turn so quietly, without a word, when he said his horrid "Il faut partir." And how little the Roman can have thought what the sign of his new name would do for him. Easy enough to promise obedience by the river side, and even to think of martyrdom: as easy as for Maude to make her promise in church; but it was a different matter the getting into the carriage. And, oh dear, what must it have been to him? Hubert shut the Bible hastily, and got up, wandering round

the room; but still O'Hara's words pursued him. There came the picture next of the prisoner in his chains. It was not to be as he had thought after all; not one brave suffering of agony and death, and then the welcoming "Well done" in the Master's presence. No: the promised obedience led him to shame, to the loss of all that made life worth living, and to the dull, miserable round for years of a slave's life. How could he bear it, and with that mark of his disgrace in his forehead to make it impossible and hopeless ever to gain again his old happiness; and yet, as Harry says, "hundreds of years in heaven must have made him glad enough that the ray of sunlight shone upon his arm." Hubert leaned his head against the window, and a heavy sigh came from the bottom of his heart as he pressed his hands together on his chest. He was wearied of himself and of his thoughts. Unbidden, the question would press itself home, "to what is my promise of obedience leading me?" It was but a new form of the restless feeling of the past weeks, and he would not answer it. "To anything but one thing; to that it never shall." He turned from the window and went up and down the room again. "What a fool I am, plaguing myself day after day like this; there is no sense in thinking that what has all been settled for me by father, mother, and uncle, ever since I was born, can be altered now. It is not my concern. My business is just to try and serve God always, in the way that has been fixed for me. Only about four months more now. Maude's marriage ring may lead her to Russia, and the Roman's sign may have led him to slavery; mine shall lead nowhere but to sea, to be as good and useful a servant of Christ as uncle is."

The sound of many merry voices coming through the garden was a welcome one, notwithstanding his satisfied resolve, and he hastened to the door at the same minute to open it for O'Hara, who in glossy black velvet, and with hair as shining as Mrs. Wibner's pride could make it, lay

again ready to receive his sister and their guests as they came in. There was no difficulty in banishing troublesome thoughts then. That quiet room, since O'Hara had lived in it, had never echoed to the sound of so many voices before. Geraldine and Maxwell seemed bent on making them all forget the morning's sorrow, and they had succeeded well by the time a pile of long unused comic songs was turned out of some corner, and Geraldine had set Maxwell to sing them to her accompaniment, exciting the others to join in chorus. Even O'Hara's weak tones were not wanting, while little Helen sat beside him on the couch, singing in her own fashion and clapping her hands between each verse.

When the nursery party was fetched home, the elder ones drew together to listen to Maxwell's stories, of which he had a strange assortment; O'Hara following with others as remarkable, learnt from Malta acquaintances; and Hubert repeating some of Oswald's. By and by Colonel Dennis joined them; and though, at first, his coming caused an embarrassed silence, he presently, finding how they were amusing themselves, offered to contribute his share. And Hubert and May wondered more than once, during the course of his wild Indian story, what Dermot would say, if he could come into their midst, and see the stern harsh father he had left, sitting beside his invalid child, his hand clasped in his, evidently no longer feared and unloved.

"Come as often as you can, any of you," he said, as he bade them good night. "You, Hubert, specially, will always be welcome, as though you were O'Hara's brother. You are the greatest blessing my poor child possesses. He has told you of the penance he is going through. I often marvel that even his cheerfulness stands it."

They were standing at the front door, and the rest had passed on.

"Yes: I am so sorry for him. I will come whenever I

can. It makes one wish one could do something more for him than only sitting with him."

"Something more you have done for him," Colonel Dennis said, with feeling. "Thank God you ever knew him! You have taught him what I neglected to take thought whether he knew,—the true secret of peace and happiness. His submissiveness to the will of the Almighty is a daily lesson."

"It is not anything I have taught him," said Hubert, quickly. "It is his own goodness."

And returning the Colonel's grasp, he left him, and ran on to rejoin his brothers and sister.



CHAPTER XV.

THE SAILOR AT HOME.

"By shattered hopes, crossed plans and fruitless pains,
Thy heavenly Master thy allegiance trains."

"O H, hurrah! hurrah! Uncle has hurt his foot!" Hubert flourished a letter in the air as he spoke; and springing over the back of his chair, shouted again, "Hurrah! Who would have thought of such luck? Where is 'Bert?" And he was rushing from the room.

"Stay, Hubert! Are you mad?" cried his father. "What is all this about?"

And May, pausing in her work of collecting scraps for her spaniel round the breakfast table, asked, astonished, "What is come to you, to be rejoicing at uncle hurting himself? What is it he has done?"

"Oh, you silly!" Hubert cried, rushing at her, and kissing her ecstatically. "I'm half mad with joy."

"Much more than half," said his father. "Now, just stand still, and tell me what your uncle says. You were groaning only a minute ago at having only a few lines."

"Ah, it's like having a sovereign instead of a bag of pence: you might growl when you only felt its size, and hurrah after."

"You are enigmatical, my son. Read and enlighten us; for I must go."

"The first little bit is just private for me, and no one

shall see it," Hubert said, nodding his head at his sister, as she tried to look over his shoulder, and laughing still with pleasure at what the few words said, which he would not read aloud.

"DEAR HUBERT,

"My scrawl shall be to you, though I promised to write to your father by this mail; but I have been knocked down, and can only send a line, and that shall be yours, as I know that what I have to say will bring more pleasure to you than to anyone. The thought of being back with you again, dear old boy, is a very decided spice of happiness among all my trouble,—but to my news."

"Now listen," said Hubert, beginning to read aloud.

"My news is, that a few weeks ago one of the men, while helping to lift a quantity of chain cable, stumbled, and let it and an iron bar come crash upon my unlucky foot. My left boot has had a holiday since. Our surgeon does not seem to know his trade; and only torments instead of curing me. I had a visit from our Admiral to-day. He says one of the squadron is going home at once; and I am to go in her, and get mended by someone who knows how feet are made. He was kindness itself, and sat with me a full hour. I hope it won't be a long job. But I am running the risk of having to go in for a cork foot soon. I often wish my own were off now. Give my love to your father, and all round. I shall be past telling glad to see everyone again. I can't say how soon I shall be home: not long after my letter, I daresay.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"O. A. R."

"There, now: what do you say to that?"

"Oh, poor uncle: how glad I shall be to see him!" May exclaimed. "But how dreadfully it must have hurt him."

"Yes: it is all very well crowing over his being obliged to come home, Hubert," said Mr. Raymond. "But it is evidently a serious accident; and it is no joke for a sailor

to be lamed for life. I cannot at all sympathize with your rejoicing."

He looked as though he did not. And Hubert, damped, said earnestly, "Oh, papa, you know, of course, what I mean! Of course I wouldn't have wished him hurt,—but now he is, I can't help feeling crazy at the thought of seeing him again; and when we had thought it wouldn't be for three years."

"I can only think of the consequences. It is very wrong not to have competent surgeons. Surely they might have found one in all those vessels, without sending the poor boy all this long voyage in search of cure." And Mr. Raymond left the room with clouded brow.

"Well, I don't care what papa says. I have always heard people say that feet are very troublesome things to cure: there are so many little bones. I am afraid he must be ill as well, by his writing. Look how shaking it is."

May agreed. "I'll go and see about his room being ready, anyway, in case of his coming upon us suddenly."

And Hubert rushed off, to communicate his delight to the rest of the house, where he found no lack of sympathy. Only on Osbert's face he thought he saw the same cloud as on his father's.

"Oh, 'Bert, aren't you glad?" he asked.

"Yes, of course. But there is no need screaming about it in the way you do. And you won't find him any such particular good, if he is in bed, or tied to a chair."

"Why, as if it wasn't just enough to have him!" was the indignant answer.

"Do you care for people only for what good they are to you, Osbert?" asked their tutor, who had been listening also to the reading of the letter.

"No: not only, of course. But it won't be the same thing as having him to go about with, and cricketing and all."

"To be able to be near him is enough for me," said

Hubert. "Oh, I hope he will come soon! Is there time for me to run down and tell Mr. Cox before lessons, sir?"

"No: ten minutes only. I don't believe though you will be fit to work without a run to let the steam off. You may go, and make the time up after. You too, if you like, Osbert."

"No: I like getting done as soon as I can," Osbert answered. While his brother, with an assurance that he should be there and back like a puff of wind, went off.

"Papa won't be so particularly glad," said Osbert, "any more than I am: I know that."

"Why should you think so?" Mr. Maynard asked. "And why are you not?"

"Because I've determined to go away from here, and go into the navy, and uncle will stand in the way of it, I know; and papa wants to see Hubert turn and not go, and uncle will stand in the way of that. That is why; only I mustn't say so to Hu., because papa told me I wasn't to speak about it to him. I asked papa long ago, and I asked him again the other day; and he said this time he thought it would be a very good thing for me."

So saying, Osbert left the room; and Mr. Maynard sat rubbing his knee, thinking, till the clock warned the hour, and he rose with a sigh. "Poor boy, poor dear boy! How will it all turn out? I have my doubts."

Hubert's run to the bailiff's cottage was cut short half way by the sight of the well-known short figure, in its clothing of shepherd's plaid, mounting one of the slopes leading towards the woods. The boy was soon at his side, shouting his news into his ear.

Mr. Cox, turning round with beaming face, caught his hand in both his, shaking it up and down, saying, "Indeed I wish you joy, master Hubert. Truly I do rejoice to think of seeing his face again; and I am chiefly glad for you."

"Well, Mr. Cox, you are best of all. You are glad, just as I am, for the very thought of the sight of him, and I

know he is glad too. I'll read you what he says, while you walk. Which way are you going?"

"I am just going up to his farm now," said the bailiff. "I am thankful I shall be able to give him so good an account of it. Ah, it is pleasant when the master comes suddenly, long before we expect, to have a good account ready for him!"

The boy looked up, then said: "But what do you mean by his farm? I never knew he had one."

"Didn't you? Didn't Mr. Oswald tell you he had bought the Moor Farm just before he went away? But please read your letter."

"What made him buy it: that was one of papa's?" Hubert said, as he unfolded his often read sheet.

"Well perhaps you had better ask Mr. Raymond: he mightn't like my telling, as he hasn't told you himself; but it was just like Mr. Oswald."

Hubert resolved to ask on the first good opportunity, and proceeded to read his letter, flying back as soon as it was finished and springing in through the library window. "There, I don't believe I have been a quarter of an hour!"

"Twenty minutes, exactly," said the tutor, thinking his happy face a treat to look at, as he seated himself opposite, a smile coming uncalled every now and then, even in the midst of irregular conjugations and Latin construing.

"If Maude were here now, she'd say you were finding uncle's name in your Euclid, seeing you grinning away like that," said Osbert, as his brother's smile was nearly a laugh, as he traced his circles and angles.

"Let him enjoy himself, Osbert," Mr. Maynard said, unable to prevent a smile creeping over his own face as Hubert looked up. "He is not stopping his work for it. Smiles from a happy heart are like bubbles in a glass of champagne: you can't keep them down. I would rather see his smiles over his Euclid than hear his usual sighs. It is

true,—isn't it, Hubert?—'he that hath a merry heart hath a continual feast.'"

"Yes, sir, quite. Even Euclid is no harm to me to-day."

In the afternoon, the news had to be taken to the Grange; and after that, there was nothing but to begin the waiting and expectation, which grew very trying when day after day passed on, till more than a week had gone by, and still no letter, nor, what Hubert was always expecting, the unannounced arrival. He grew irritable with the deferring of his hopes, vexed that others were not so eager as himself; and finding his best solace in O'Hara's impatience, nearly equalling his own.

"I can't imagine what can have happened to stop him," he sighed out, for the twentieth time, as he was leaving the Grange, the second Friday after the arrival of his letter.

O'Hara giving his usual answer, "Yes: he said he should start at once."

"And papa keeps on saying his foot may have got better, and that I shall get a letter next mail to say he found it wasn't necessary to come. It makes me half mad to hear him; for I see he really thinks it may be so, and wouldn't much mind if it were."

"Poor Hubert!" Geraldine said, laughing. "You are always going mad about something or other,—joy, or disappointment, or indignation. I wouldn't hit about at my boots any more, if I were you; but go and touch up your pony instead. There is no knowing what you may find when you reach home."

There was a twinkle in her eyes which made Hubert say a hurried Good-bye, and take her advice, giving no time to consider what grounds she could have for her hint.

"Gerry, is he come?"

"I don't know, darling. But as I was dressing just now, I saw a fly going up the village; and there was a brown leather portmanteau on the box."

Three carriages before the door was an unusual sight;

but all that Hubert stopped to see was that one of them was the old black fly from the village inn, and he was off, his pony and in the hall in a moment, looking round for someone to ask, "Where is he?" But the place was empty.

"Do you know, sir, that Mr. Oswald Raymond has just come home?" asked a voice outside. It was Major Yorke's groom, as Hubert saw by the high phaeton and tall greys, when he stepped back to the door. "We have just carried him into the library," the man added."

"Carried him!" Hubert cried.

"Yes: he is terrible lame," the flyman said, as he turned his horse. "He can't dare put his foot near the ground, nor have it touched. 'Tis a pity. Such a fine strong gentleman as he looked, the day I see him walk into church: last Christmas it was."

Hubert waited to hear no more; but, with his first realization of other consequences of a hurt foot than a return home, crossed the hall to the library door.

On the sofa Oswald was sitting, with one knee drawn up, and his head down upon it; the other leg straight out, with a covering hanging from the back of the sofa over the foot. He looked round as the door opened, and held out his hand, with a "Well, Hu." And the boy's arms were round his neck, a sudden feeling of sorrow mingling with his joy, as he saw him sitting so, stopping his words. It was a different meeting from what he had so often pictured, as Oswald, though keeping hold of his hand, said no further word of greeting, only resting his head down on the back of the sofa, asking, restlessly, "Did you happen to see May outside? I asked her to send me some wine, and she is taking long enough to make it. Do find Foster, and tell him. There is a herd of visitors: they are keeping her, perhaps."

"I'll go and see for it," Hubert said, and found his sister just outside the door. "Oh, May, how terribly bad he looks! Let me take that to him."

"Yes: do. I ought to go back to the drawing-room. Draw the cork first. I could not find Foster. He is very tired, and in great pain, I am afraid. And it vexed him everyone rushing into the hall; and the Yorkes of all people, whom he doesn't like at any time. Oh, Hu., such a sailor has come with him! There, go and give him some of that. Papa says this will do him more good than wine: it's some Chartreuse Major Yorke brought from Switzerland for papa last year."

"I won't tell him that," Hubert said, busy with the corkscrew, "or he won't drink it. I hope Miss Yorke didn't come fussing over him. I can fancy his face."

"No: I kept her on the stairs. But it was her rustling silk, I think, brought back the thought of someone else. He looked up with such a start, just as if he expected mamma to come to meet him; and then spoke so sharply to papa. I daresay last year comes back to him, and his dreadful coming home: poor uncle! There, go and comfort him."

Hubert did his best. But though the clear yellow liqueur brought some warmth into his colourless cheeks and white unused-looking hands, he only responded to Hubert's remarks in monosyllables, seeming too weary to speak, and oppressed with pain; while the boy stood by him, thinking it sad that all his delighted hopes should end like this.

Presently there were voices in the hall, and May looked in, saying, with a wink at her brother, "Major and the Miss Yorkes wish me to ask uncle if they may come and shake hands with him."

"No: certainly not," was Oswald's decided answer. "Don't let her say that, though. Say something civil. I want to see no one. I would rather be alone."

"Should you like me to go, then, uncle?" Hubert said, doubtfully.

"No, no: you are no one!" And Hubert gave the

message, and sat waiting still, till Oswald said, "If all those folk have gone, ask your father to come and speak to me. I behaved like a bear to him just now. Pain is not improving to my temper."

The second set of visitors was just gone, as May's delighted spring down the stairs and dance round the hall said, and Mr. Raymond was coming down. Catching his son by the arm, "Hubert, has he asked about Maude?" he said.

"No, papa."

"Well, he knows nothing about it, you see: the letters will have reached after he must have left. You tell him all about it, there's a good boy, and save me the first outcry. You will make the best of it for your sister, I know."

So saying, he went into the library.

"Come and shake hands again, Newton. I hardly knew what I was saying just now."

"You were tired and suffering," said his brother, kindly. "Has my cordial done you no good?"

"A little. But I am frightfully done up: it is the many hours' shaking."

"If you had thought to telegraph, the carriage would have been there to meet you. You had better go up to bed at once, now. You will feel better when you have had your dinner, I daresay; and nurse shall come and see what she can do to ease your foot." He rang the bell, adding, "It is nonsense sitting like that: you are not resting. Go up with him, Hu., and help him. You needn't do any lessons this evening."

The bell was answered by the appearance of a broad-shouldered yellow-haired sailor, to whom Oswald turned, saying, "Here, Morgan: I am ordered up to bed. I hope they have given you something to eat downstairs? Hu., this is Morgan I told you of, who saved little Donne, when he fell overboard. He has kindly come far out of his way home to help me. Morgan, my nephew is wanting to

shake hands with you. He is going to sea in the autumn himself."

Hubert crossed the room, and put his hand into the sailor's, who took it, saying, "The best thing I can hope for you, then, sir, is, that you may be just such another officer as Mr. Raymond,—that a man may feel proud to serve under."

"I'll see what I can do to copy him," said Hubert, flushing with pleasure, and at the same time uncomfortably conscious of his father's listening ears; while Oswald, turning round to them, as the boy stood looking the sailor over, said, "You have never seen a man-of-war's man before: have you, Hu.?"

"No, uncle: never. I am so glad you came. I shall come down presently to talk to you."

"And ask him to show you his medal, if he has it with him, that he had for saving Charlie; and, Morgan, tell him your story about the shark."

"Oswald, you had better not be lingering like this," Mr. Raymond said, hastily. "Hubert, go and call Foster to help, and tell him to bring Marks, or someone: the man can't lift your uncle alone."

"Don't trouble yourself to wait, nor you, May," said Oswald. And seeing he disliked the thought of witnesses to his helplessness, they left him.

Once shut in with him in his room alone, Hubert began to realize that his wished-for happiness was really his. The evening was drawing on, and the sense of quiet, and the rest and refreshing of change of posture, and cool linen, had removed much of Oswald's weariness; nurse's tendance, too, had given some relief to the pain. He had been lying still a long while, as it seemed to Hubert, who was impatient to talk, and who feared sleep might come and prevent him altogether; but his uncle looked round after a time, saying, "Well, old boy, I don't believe I have said yet how very glad I am to see you again. Where is Maude; and Osbert? I haven't seen either of them."

"He was out when you came ; and papa said no one had better come to you this evening."

"Yes : quite right. It is such peace to rest like this at last, after these long weeks of such terrible pain. I had never dreamed I could be so tired as I was this afternoon."

"It seems so odd to hear you talking of being quiet, uncle : it is like papa."

Oswald laughed. "He won't be able to tell me again that I don't understand what pain means. I'll answer for it his head has never been a match for my foot. He is not looking nearly so well, I am sorry to see, as when I left. What is all this about Maude ? I met young Duff at the Portsmouth station, and he began something about Miss Raymond, and a surprisingly sudden engagement and what a loss she would be. But it was a troublesome business moving ; and I hardly took in what he was saying. Is there anything in the wind ?"

The answer to that question was a long one.

"I am not tiring you talking : am I ?" Hubert asked, in the middle of it.

"No. Go on : tell me everything." Oswald answered in a voice so stern, that the boy was sure already what place Maude had made for herself in the esteem of the one with whom he most cared to stand high ; and yet he was not forgetting his father's words,—“You will make the best of it for your sister.”

The episode about Mr. Maynard lengthened his story, which was not ended when the bell rang for prayers.

"I'll come up and tell you the rest after," said Hubert, as he stood up.

"Yes : do. And bring up Morgan with you to say Good night. He will be glad to see me comfortable at last."

Mr. Raymond's question aside to Hubert, when the servants had left the room, was, "Well, Hu., what does he say to it ?"

"Nothing: I haven't done telling him yet. I can't stop. I must call Morgan."

"The blue serge is a great attraction," said Mr. Maynard, as Hubert ran from the room. "I saw he could hardly keep his eyes off him all prayer time."

"Oh, he quite won his heart, I saw," said May: "telling him to be an officer like uncle."

"I wonder how long Oswald will want the man here?" said Mr. Raymond. And the tutor saw that the blue serge was not admired by the father as by the son; he saw, too, that Osbert's thought about the feeling Oswald's presence would raise was true, as he added, in an irritated tone, "I never saw the boy look so good-for-nothing; and his foot is in a dreadful state. He will be months getting round. I hope my note went to Dr. Scott, May?"

"Yes, papa. But uncle says he is not going to trouble doctors, and that he shall get all right of himself, now that he is at home, and quiet."

"Hubert tells me he is looking very ill," said Mr. Maynard.

"Ill! Wretched. His clothes hang on him as if they had never been made for him. Nonsense about not seeing a doctor. He will see Scott to-morrow; and I'll have the best man he can tell me of down from town about his foot. May, tell Mrs. Lawrence to send up something sustaining for him for the night. He says he can never sleep hardly for the pain, and he ate nothing for dinner. He shall have every chance he can for getting up quickly again: poor fellow!"

"And of being able to take his departure, you would say, if you finished your thought," the tutor said to himself.

Hubert, as he had truly said, was charmed with the presence of the sailor. All his uneasy doubtings and misgivings had flown altogether at the first sight of his uncle; even the thought of his coming had nearly banished them; and now, as he guided the man to Oswald's door, Osbert following, his talk was of his hopes that Morgan

would be on *his* ship, that *his* captain would be none other than his uncle, who ought certainly by that time to be a commander, and his desire, that his first voyage should be to the Pacific.

"Yes: you might enjoy that. There are plenty of fresh sights to be seen. But how would you like the heat, sir? I heard you a while ago saying it was hot. Bless you: you don't know anything of what heat is till you get down there, or off the Cape, where we have just come from!" said the man, as Hubert opened the door.

"At it already, Hu.? Make the most of your time," Oswald said. "Is that the heat of the Cape? Oh, you get used to it soon enough, except when you are laid up, and then give me this instead. More chance of getting on my feet again now: eh, Morgan?"

"Ay, you may say so, sir," said the man, looking round the pleasant airy room, the breeze lifting the curtains as it blew in; while Oswald, seeing a curly head at the door, called, "Is that you, 'Bert? Come in a minute and say how dye do," and the boy stepped in, exclaiming, "Oh, uncle, I didn't know you were as ill as this!"

"I'm not ill, my boy, thank you: only lying here to rest. You see I am rich in nephews, Morgan," he said, as Osbert came to his side.

"And is this young gentleman going to sea, too, when he is old enough?"

"No: he is to be a landsman," said Oswald; "though as to being old enough, he is twin brother to the other."

The man's look of incredulity as he glanced from one boy to the other was fun to Hubert, who drew himself up, laughing; but to Osbert, at all times sensitive about his size, that, and the word "landsman," sounding to him a disgraceful term, used in the presence of two sailors, brought a flush of anger to his face, and he answered moodily, "I don't know what I am going to be: it is very likely I shall go to sea after all."

Oswald's laugh, as at a joke, was not soothing, nor were Hubert's hot words, "You know you are not, 'Bert: it is false to say so."

"Hush, hush, Hu.!" said his uncle. "No, it would never do for you both to be known through the navy all your lives as the big and little Mr. Raymond." Then catching side of Osbert's face as he turned towards the light, "Never mind, 'Bert, about your height, you may catch Hu. up yet; and there is no shame in being short."

"Catch him out, rather," muttered the boy, as their father came in.

"Are you come to see we take proper care of your charge?" he said to the sailor.

"I wish he could have had it from the first of his hurt, sir," was the answer: "he seems to me to look pulled up a bit already," and touching his front lock of sandy hair he disappeared.

"Pray allow Hubert half-an-hour's law," Oswald said, as the father's watch was held before the boys. "He was giving me a family history, and I want the end of it."

"Then I shall stay up too," said Osbert. "It isn't fair that Hubert should always be the one to miss lessons and sit up late."

"What is that you are talking about fairness, Osbert?" asked his father, sharply. "If your brother is required for some service, he will stay where he is told, and render it; and you will go where you are told, and that is to bed."

Hubert felt very grave as the door closed behind his brother, and he heard his father's remark, "Sulky little mortal that is!" and Oswald's answer, "But it is trying: I ought to have included him. You must say Yes when I ask for a holiday for them both to-morrow." Why was it that it always happened so, when he had taken such particular care to leave the door ajar that 'Bert shouldn't think himself shut out, and be jealous, and that uncle should be sure to see him, and call him in?

The brothers talked together for a little, and then Mr. Raymond said Good night. His hand was held for a minute, as Oswald said, "I am very sorry for you, Newton, about Maude. Hubert has just been telling me: it must have been a great grief to you."

"Indeed it is. I had hardly expected to have had sympathy from you, Oswald: I had expected a torrent of indignation."

"You were mistaken, then. It is not my place to judge your conduct with regard to your own children, more especially only hearing the particulars at second-hand."

"Thank you, Oswald: I am glad you feel so justly, though I can well believe you think me worthy of one of your sharpest judgments."

"Newton, I am sorry I have earned such a character. I fear I speak too strongly sometimes; but I really don't think I merit that," Oswald said, looking troubled. "Anyway, I am not the judge of your dealings with your own children, except, indeed, with this one," he added, with a smile at Hubert. "If you let him have his own way more than was good for him I should remonstrate."

"Is there any fear of that, Hu.?" said his father, and with a few last charges and questions as to his brother's comfort he turned and left them.

"Uncle, I don't want to ask what you wouldn't answer papa about, but I just wanted to know one thing." Hubert had finished his home story, and had his uncle's Bible open ready to read him a Psalm before he left him. "Do you think Maude could have done differently from what she did, when she had promised?"

"It was no question as to Maude's conduct that I refused to answer, it was as to your father's in the matter. As to Maude, I have no hesitation at all in saying what I think: unmitigated selfishness is what I call it, from beginning to end, though I suppose your father would say that was one of my judgments. But don't think me hard judging, Hu.,

I am very sorry for her. She and I were brought up like brother and sister, and it is very sad to lose her like this; but her conduct is what I call it,—pure selfishness.”

“Still you haven’t said how she could break her promise.”

“That is not the point to start from. Her story is another instance of the danger of one deliberate turning from the path of duty,—once saying to oneself, I will have my own way.”

“How, uncle: when did she?”

“Think of what she told you herself. Up to a certain point she was in the path of duty, enjoying what her parents had sent her to enjoy. Then came the news of your mother’s death. What was her duty then?”

“Why, to come home, certainly; but she said there was no escort for her.”

“Folly and nonsense about escort! Her duty was plain,—to have returned at once to take what part of her mother’s place she might, to her father and all of you. She shirked the self-denial, and the sort of life and work which did not suit her tastes. Then comes illness to detain her further, and from that time, what is it,—a series of temptations in the guise of pleasures leading her on further and further in wrong doing, till this hateful marriage is the end of it. One bold step,—giving herself pain indeed,—and all this would never have been. We should never have heard of this Frenchman, and she would have been filling this empty place, which now must be empty unless it be filled—” He stopped himself, and went on hastily, “But it is for herself I sorrow most. The coming back to obedience when the road one would like to retrace is closed behind one, and the repentance, with no hope of undoing the wrong, must be such bitter work, sometimes so terrible, yet more terrible still if we were let to go on.”

Hubert sat silent. His uncle’s words recalled to his mind the conversation he had had with the bailiff on the subject of the wandering sheep and the watching care of the Shepherd, and also what had impressed him more

recently and painfully,—his tutor's dropped words about himself.

"Yes, Hu.," Oswald went on, "I have the strongest feeling on that subject. As an old friend who used to stay with us when I was a child was always saying, 'As you sow, so you reap : ' and he was right. Besides every other higher consideration, I dread sin : dread it for its consequences. There are so many sorts of harvests you may reap. Poor Maude's first sowing brought up a crop of pleasant temptations, only too easy to yield to."

"How do you mean, uncle?"

"Why, like this : if I deliberately choose my own will in any matter, and put myself out of the way God ordered me to walk in, the very pleasures I meet with then, in that way of my own choosing, might just turn to so many temptations leading me further astray, as it did happen to Maude. All I hope and pray for myself is, that if ever I choose my own will knowingly, contrary to God's law, punishment may come quickly, or anything to bring me up sharp."

"Mr. Cox says the Lord always punishes His people if they go wrong," said Hubert, seriously, "and sometimes with punishments dreadful to bear."

"He will always draw them back to Himself, I believe ; but I don't think Cox can have said He always punishes. The leading of the Holy Spirit will often bring us to repentance. I dare say, though, that Cox was speaking of the sort of thing I was thinking of,—not of the sins into which our evil nature leads us daily, such as loss of temper, or pride, or impatience ; but of those sins which we once now and then have the opportunity of committing, when God's laws and our wills come into direct opposition, and we have to make the deliberate choice, 'Which way shall I go?' as Maude had at Florence."

"I wish things were never left to us to choose," Hubert said, with such earnestness that his uncle looked at him surprised.

"Why, Hu., you have not been much troubled with any such responsibility yet," he said, smiling; "and when a trial of that sort does come to us, it gives us an opportunity of showing the love we bear our Saviour, by a sacrifice, sometimes only known to Him, sometimes seen by others, and so bringing glory to the name we bear."

"Yes: like the martyrs," said Hubert. "Uncle, if one of them had given in, do you think God would have punished him?"

"Some did: and years of secret sorrow and shame was the punishment they made for themselves, often ending in a brave martyrdom after all. Wrong doing brings its own punishment. You mustn't get the idea of our heavenly Father as a hard judge, watching for our stumbling to bring His judgments on us. If He punishes, it is whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and as a father the son in whom he delighteth; but let us both pray, Hu., that we may never be left to ourselves to fall, for assuredly wilful sin, such as we have been thinking of, leaves its griefs, and often its scars for life. Our only confidence is in David's prayer, 'I am Thy servant, let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' What are you thinking of so seriously, old fellow?" he asked, after a time, during which Hubert had been pondering, staring on the floor.

He started, saying, "I was thinking of what you said. If one did do what one wanted to, I mean if it weren't right, it would be unmaking oneself a servant of Christ, and letting the iniquity have the dominion instead. One might say, letting the devil be one's master."

His uncle wondered at his words, and at his tone, and said, "Can we, the redeemed of Christ, ever unmake ourselves servants? You remember the Greek is not *servant*, but *slave*. We are bought with a price, and it is a claim we may use in our prayers, as David did, 'I am Thy servant.' We can't even imagine our Lord hearing such a cry, and not coming to our help, against the one from whom He

rescued us. His promise is, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' Let us trust Him, Hu.: we are His, and His Spirit is promised as our continual teacher, whose voice we may always hear, saying, "This is the way: walk ye in it."

Again Oswald was struck by the grave eyes fixed on his face, not the usual look of a boy listening to such words. There seemed no thought of turning from the subject, though he thought he had said all there was any need to say. "What is it you have in your head?" he asked. "You are thinking of something."

For a moment, as he heard him speak, and saw the kind look turned on him, Hubert had it in his heart to ask aloud the question which for day and night had rankled like a thorn so long in secret, growing daily in strength and power to make itself felt. How it had first planted itself he hardly knew; but that it was pressing in deeply now, and with power to spoil every pleasure, and to make every duty cared for only as a means of escape from the thought of it, he knew only too well. Oh, why was it that his short time of ease, while all feeling was occupied with rejoicing and expectation, had so quickly come to an end, and the first hour's talk with his uncle, the very pleasure to which he had so looked forward, brought it all back with redoubled distress! Should he speak, and ask him, and hear the comforting, "Folly and nonsense! What makes you think of such a thing?" But would that bring satisfied rest? Alas, no: uncle was not living at home, and could not tell; and to speak of it at all, would be to make the thing he dreaded even to think of, a possibility to be discussed. No: better leave it as it was,—a fear hidden in his own mind, the question of right or wrong in the matter, an undecided point. Should he ever clearly hear the Master's voice, "This is the way, walk ye in it"? And if heard, how should he answer?

"Hu., I am sure there is something vexing you," Oswald

said again, as he saw the look which passed over the boy's face as he asked himself the silent question.

"What makes you think so, uncle? I say, did you ever have to make up your mind about a thing, and hurt yourself?"

"Yes, many a time: not in anything very great though. As to that, however, one can never tell where a small looking decision may lead, or what one may miss by taking wrong turnings. You haven't told me yet what is making you think about all this."

"I was thinking about what you had been saying," said the boy. "How is your foot feeling now? Shall I read, for the half hour is gone, and I am afraid I oughtn't to stay?"

"Ah, I had forgotten the time. That is the best preparation, Hu., for making a right decision whenever the greater trials of obedience come,—careful conscientiousness in the little every day ones: it forms the habit. Read the fifty-sixth."

"Did you choose that because of what we were talking of?" Hubert asked, as he stood up.

"No: it was next in order for my own reading. Why, because of the last verses? Yes, they give us the true ground of confidence in any trial of our devotion. 'Thy vows are upon me, O God. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling?' We have had a very grave subject for our talk to-night; you must think of one more cheering for to-morrow, to keep my spirits up, under your father's threat of the London surgeon."

Hubert saw he was still wondering what had caused him to carry it on, by the way he looked at him, and answered brightly, "It was Maude set us going. I'll tell you all about Harry and Geraldine and our rides to the kilns to-morrow, and how the children—but if I begin about that I shall never stop. See, I have put everything within your reach, and here is a new book papa liked, for you, in case you lie awake."

As Mr. Raymond was taking his after-breakfast stroll

among the flower-beds next morning, Osbert followed his steps and drew to his side, walking with him a few yards silently. "Well, curly pate, what do you want?"

"May I pick one of the big roses for uncle? I want to take him one."

"Surely. Show me which you would like, and I will cut it for you, or you may be doing mischief among Baird's treasures. It is long since uncle has seen one of his favourite roses, poor fellow. I hope Hu. has not forestalled you, I saw him racing up just now."

The richly perfumed half-opened blossom was selected, and while his father was getting his knife ready, and lifting the leaves to choose where to make his cut, Osbert began: "I only do wish uncle had chosen a few months later for getting hurt. I know it is all up with me now, and Hu. is as mad for it as ever again."

"What is it you mean? There, we wont sacrifice that bud needlessly."

"Why, you know what you said the other day, and now uncle is back there is no chance for me. He is always talking to Hu., and that just sets him on it; and I declare he was beginning not to care half so much. Why he hardly ever spoke of it; and I won't stay at home if he goes, I vow I won't."

"Here, take your rose: you had better have a white one to go with it. It is no use talking in that way: you will do just as I say you will."

"Well, do say then, please, papa, that we may both go. I do want to, really: it is so horrid, with the fellows always after me to go with them; and if I keep away there isn't any fun anywhere else. Do, please, say I may go: I want to tell uncle and Hu. you said so."

"You will say nothing of the kind. Why can't you find enjoyment as your brother does? The fellows don't trouble him."

"Oh, he is a 'duffer,' they all say: the only things he

cares for are cricket and football. Papa, I really do want awfully to be a sailor: I can't bear to have uncle call me a landsman, as he does."

"Osbert, you have heard all you need to content you,—that I am willing, if it can be managed. But if I catch you saying one word to Hubert, or your uncle, you shall never set foot on shipboard, except in a landsman's dress. Now, there is a splendid white one. Better take them up to him at once, for I see Dr. Scott's gig yonder."

Oswald was not a little startled, when, some time later, he and his brother were alone together, by Mr. Raymond's beginning, "Oswald, you know my home is yours, and always will be, as if you were my son, till you have one of your own; but I want to ask you to yield to my right to rule all in it as master, and to"——

"Patience, Newton! What is up? what have I done? You don't mind my having taken possession of the next room, surely? I wanted some change of air."

"No: nonsense! I have just ordered the wardrobe to be taken out of it, that you may have the door open between, and you can be wheeled through. No. You remember, last time you were home, I asked you to abstain from urging upon Hubert this idea of yours of the sea as his profession, and you paid no heed to me then?"

"*My* idea! Why, wasn't it your own, and his mother's, and, since he had any, his own too?"

"Well, never mind whose it was originally. Had you not been at sea, it would have entered no one's head, I believe. However, what I wish you to oblige me in is, in being silent entirely on the subject during your stay at home now, as I am determined I will not have him influenced. If you really were my son, I should lay my commands on you."

"Is this in order to leave you free to influence him the other way?" Oswald asked, quickly.

"That would not be leaving him uninfluenced: would it?"

"Uninfluenced towards the way you seem to dislike the

thought of his taking. Have you changed your intention of sending him to sea?"

"I cannot say. I ever had any intention with regard to the matter," said Mr. Raymond; forgetting, as he spoke, the years during which the future of his third son had been always talked of by himself, as by everyone else, as fixed,—only remembering the past year's shrinking from the loss of him. "It shall be his own choice, if the thing is done; but it shall be a choice uninfluenced either way."

"I must say I don't understand you. You talk of Hu's choice as a future thing. Is it not made already? I have never seen indecision in him as to entering the navy, more than in myself, as to going on in it."

"As I never speak to him on the subject, that is what I cannot judge of. No word has passed between us for months about it. And now, Oswald, I must have your consent to following the same course also."

"Oh, certainly: you are captain in your own house! I have nothing I want to say to him about it." And Oswald pulled his book to him with a jerk; but added, after a moment, more quietly, "I am sorry you dislike the project so much. His mother was always so earnest for it, and exciting his hopes towards it."

"She had not the near parting to face, nor was he to her what he is now to me,—my most treasured link to the past, and comfort in my dreary present; doubly dreary since last month's loss, which makes me dread the thought of another. Of course I might forbid his leaving me; but that I don't choose so to use my authority."

"Nor do I think you could, Newton, begging your pardon, unless you count your promise, and that of his mother, as nothing."

"It is foolish harping on that, Oswald! Words spoken in joke cannot be considered binding."

"Joke! There was no joke in the matter," said Oswald, hotly. "Joke! What do all these years of thought, and

hopes bent but in one direction, say to that? Look at the boy's whole life. Was it a joke which made me and the whole house look upon him as my special charge? Why, he knows more now to fit him to be a good sailor than many lads when they have been three years at sea. Was it a joke which made me give time, care, and thought for him beyond all the others, till, at one time, it was only I to whom he looked, and I had to teach him, as a revelation, that your authority was before mine? Would all that have been if the words which his mother said, and which you repeated, had not been spoken and accepted in all seriousness? Rather late in the day, truly, to turn round and tell one it meant nothing. Hu. doesn't think it meant nothing, I can assure you, nor did his mother. Have the kindness to give me that tin case in the corner, and I will let you see her words; and the bunch of keys on the table."

Mr. Raymond complied, saying, "Don't work yourself into an excitement about it. If I do not agree in the binding nature of a promise so given, I have told you my action will be no otherwise than if I did."

"There, read that. No: don't take it."

And Oswald held before his brother's eyes the lines of trembling writing, and, with his face full of distress, Mr. Raymond read them. "As to Hubert, let him be your boy still, now more than ever: he is my charge to you. He has shown tenderness and thoughtfulness towards Newton, and love and gentleness to myself I should never have looked for. His love for you is very great: cherish it for my sake. The promise about him was a *promise*: it is my dearest wish for him. My strength is" — There the sheet was folded; and Mr. Raymond rose, and walked to the window. His brother was sorry for him; but, for Hubert's sake, he had felt bound to give the pain, to fix the question what the promise he depended on had been worth. Mr. Raymond's opinion on the subject of parental authority was strong; and did he once summon courage to crush

Hubert's hope, by bringing forward his own will, "the boy is done for, that is clear," Oswald said to himself, "unless his honour will keep him to what ought to bind him, whatever he says about it. Given in joke or no, the promise has influenced the boy's whole life, and has been treated all along as serious."

His thoughts went back to the time, more than thirteen years ago, when, kneeling by the two white cots, he had looked at the unconscious baby faces, wondering aloud on their future lives; and the mother, sitting by, had told him she should give up one of them to him, to be made a man of, saying, one of an age was enough for her to look after. He had caught at the idea, and, taking it more seriously than his sister had meant, had proceeded to choose between the two the one that should be his. Passing by the first attraction of the bright rings of light hair, and the prettier baby features, his choice was fixed by the greater promise of strength which he discovered in the very ugly pointed nose of the other wee face; there had been a pressure, too, on the big finger, laid within the tiny pink palm, which had sealed the matter. The promise then given, that, all being well, the child should not only be his special charge at home, but should follow the profession he had just entered, gave seriousness to what had at first been lightly spoken. As he had just said, it had influenced the boy's whole life, giving from the first a purpose, a fixed hope, and an object to be prepared for; giving at the same time a constant guiding, which never disappointed the hopes with which the mother had given the child to it. And if, in Hubert's love, his uncle had filled to him more than the place of both father and mother, it was not a thing he could be blamed for. The father had never thought about it at all, not occupying himself much with his children, little dreaming of the jealous vexation it would cause him in later days; and the mother, with her love to the boy who had been like a son to her, encouraged it in every way.

"You see what Adelaide thought of it," Oswald said,

when his brother turned towards him again, and sat down, sighing heavily. "I am sorry to have troubled you, dear fellow; but I must stand by Hu.: I can't see his dependence pitched overboard."

"I am glad to have seen her words. Yes: he was a treasure during those days. Poor Max was quite knocked down. You needn't think, however, that Hubert needs any firmer stand-by than his father's love for him; and his best dependence is in that, not in any promise, even when viewed as seriously as you and she did."

"Unless your love might lead you to think another way of life better for him, and more satisfactory to yourself, than the one that that promise has made sure to him. But her wish is enough to prevent you changing, I am sure: is it not?" Oswald listened anxiously for the answer.

"I have told you, Oswald, my intention is to leave him free; and he will decide for himself, when the time comes. Even her wish, sacred as such must be in most cases, I do not think binding upon him, if his choice were to remain at home."

"Of course not. There is no question as to that. His inclination was always the one thing to settle the matter." And Oswald leaned back, satisfied.

"Then we understand that you say nothing more to him on the subject at all?"

"I will do my best to keep the words 'sea' and 'ship' from my tongue."

"But, seriously, Oswald, will you give me your promise?"

"Seriously, Newton, when you say you wish a thing done in your own house, I feel bound to attend to it. Now, let us talk of something else. When did old Scott say his famous friend could be here? I want him come and gone."

"He says you had better rest over Sunday. Monday, by the three o'clock train, he thought. He is to telegraph, as he passes the station. It will be an immense relief to you to have it over, poor boy."

"And to know my fate," said Oswald.

When Hubert returned, and took Mr. Raymond's place, some time afterwards, his uncle and he met each other's eyes with a laugh.

"So you have been advised, too, to be careful of your subjects of conversation."

"Not advised, uncle: strictly commanded, I can tell you. What are we to do? I know I can never remember: I am always beginning, 'When I go,' or 'Next year,' or something."

"We shall have to catch each other up," said Oswald: "not that I am quite clear what it is that we are to avoid. I must tell you my Cape hunting stories anyhow. It will be safest to begin a course of reading of 'Wellington's Campaigns,' or 'Lives of the Chancellors,' to act as influence towards the army or the bar."

"I can't think how papa can think anything can make me more determined than I am," said Hubert. "I mean to go to —— Hullo, there I am! One means to do a thing, because one has a good reason for it, and knows it will be the greatest happiness in the world to one."

"Using pronouns instead of nouns is not avoiding a subject, Hu.," said his uncle, laughing.

But Hubert went on, quickly, "He won't let me say my mind is fixed, as it has always been. He says he has avoided speaking of it to me, when it was I who haven't spoken of it to him, not to vex him, as you told me. He says he wants me to be unbiassed about it, as if I could be more than I am. I am quite determined about it."

"Of course: we both know that. Nobody doubts that. I can't think your father can, really. But now we must try and obey orders as best we may."

After a day or two, they found their obedience no difficulty. The forbidden subject was let rest; while others of nearer interest occupied their thoughts. Only in Hubert's mind it never slept.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMPANIONS AGAIN.

And my impatient will,
Under Thy yoke, shall learn
How to be constant to one end,
Yet yield at every turn.

THE weather turned hot on the Saturday afternoon, and there were many looks cast at the sky, and longings for rain ; for, as the sun reached its height at midday, the suffering, which the first exhilaration of pleasure at his return and the relief of rest seemed to have half banished, had returned upon Oswald more severely than before. The closeness of the heavy air oppressed him, and added to his restlessness ; and open doors and windows failed to make a draught. Though clouds gathered, the rain held off ; while thunder rolled in the distance.

It was a new experience to Hubert to stand by, and to be obliged to witness suffering without power of bringing relief. With his father, there was always something he could do for him ; and it drove him mad, as he expressed himself, to be unable to do anything to soothe what Oswald was not good at hiding. He wondered, too, at his irritability, and at the sharpness of tone with which he refused every fresh offer from anyone of any fresh attempt for his relief, till they left him to himself, and only his faithful follower remained, sitting silent and unnoticed in a corner, with his book, feeling not a little troubled at thinking that uncle's courage

was not up to bearing pain, and that even papa was better at it. He ran down at last, as the evening advanced, to the study, and, with tears in his eyes, implored his father to think of something to do him good, or else to let him ride for Dr. Scott. But the only result of his appeal was to find himself worked into a fresh fever by his father's calmness.

"It is no good trying things, my son : it only worries him. You know your uncle's way. He is not of a placid nature, and feels everything more keenly than most people ; besides, he has never been accustomed to suffer. The Doctor could not help him, except by putting him to sleep, and that he refused, when I offered it ; though, if he likes it now, I have left the bottle on his table. I daresay the sharpness will pass off presently : weakness makes him feel it more, and this sultriness. We must wait in patience till Monday : he will be better after then. Don't be vexing yourself about him. Better leave him a little, and go and play."

Hubert was too indignant to answer, fancying his father hard and unfeeling ; and as a visible protest against the suggestion that he should leave his post, he found Osbert, and, persuading him to help him, dragged downstairs the moveable part of his bed into the room adjoining his uncle's.

"There : now I needn't go away even at night ; and you can call me, if you want anything."

"And you think you shall wake, don't you ?" Oswald said.

"Of course I shall," he answered, confidently ; and began to use his best persuasions to get the contents of the little bottle taken : "it will at least give you some rest for a time, and you may be better then."

After many refusals Hubert carried his point, and Mr. Raymond was amused as well as relieved when he came up at ten o'clock to find both heads on their pillows, one as sound asleep as the other. Hubert satisfied his father next

morning of the wisdom of the move he had made, by telling him, with much pride, that he had waked once in the night, found uncle half awake, warmed some soup over the spirit lamp for him, and that he had turned round directly and gone to sleep again, and had slept quite late in the morning.

From that day his corner of the boy's room was empty. He never returned to it, taking up his abode downstairs, and gradually, as no objection was offered, he collected his possessions round him. Osbert made a little grumbling at first, saying he ought to have been the first to have a downstairs room; but Hubert told him he might succeed him in it as soon as ever he went to sea, and nothing more was said. From time to time pretty light pieces of furniture were introduced into it: a bright new carpet supplanted the old faded one, and a writing-table and a small book-case gave the look of study as well as bedroom. Hubert was delighted, while Oswald looked grave about it, saying it was encouraging an unsailorlike love of luxury, but promised his nephew two prints for the walls as soon as he was up to driving, and they could go together and choose them at the print shop in the neighbouring town.

The Sunday was a repetition of the day before: comparative ease in the cooler part of the day, and wearying hours of feverish restlessness and suffering till evening. He insisted on being helped into the next room, where he could be near the window, and have what air there was; but Morgan had gone on his way to his own home, and everyone else was "awkward," or "not strong enough," in his opinion, to give the right help he needed. Hubert looked so miserable over him that his father was thankful when the afternoon bells sounded and called him away. "I suppose its no use my staying, as I can't do anything for you," he said, lingering.

"No, no: go to church. No one can do me any good; and just tell Mr. Prescott it is no use coming, as he said he would: I couldn't listen to him."

Hubert looked at him ruefully and went. "I can't make poor uncle out," he said, as he walked in front of the others with his sister. "I should have thought he would have been so patient if anything were the matter with him."

"Well, Hu., I never should have set down patience as one of uncle's virtues."

"No: but I should have thought he would have made himself bear it patiently, just because it was right."

Hubert thought his idol had tottered, and his melancholy looks made May say, "Why, Hu., I wonder at *you* blaming him, poor fellow. You can't know how bad it is: it isn't long to wait till to-morrow afternoon, and he won't be sharp upon you when he is easier."

"As if I minded what he said to me! But I wanted him to be like all the good men one reads of, and show that he was stronger than the pain."

"You shouldn't be hard on him, Hu.: you don't know how much impatience he does keep down. It must be so much worse for a great, strong, restless sort of man, like uncle, who has never felt what it was not to be able to do just what he liked before, and never had half an hour's pain to bear till this. I suppose people have to learn to bear troubles properly, by practice, just as they have to learn to play the piano; and I think it must be just as much harder for hot, impatient-feeling people, like uncle, or you, than for the quiet-feeling ones, as it is for me, who have no music in me, to learn to play, than to Gerry, who plays nearly without learning."

Hubert thought she was right in the evening, when he had brought his uncle's tea to him, and in arranging the things beside him knocked down the window curtain, which had been tucked up to let in more air. A light breeze had just risen, and Oswald was beginning to feel its refreshment when the curtain shut it out. Hubert, unconscious of the effect of his touch, was filling the cup, when his uncle said, in the irritable tone the boy had heard already so often,

"Who can care for that steaming stuff, when you have just shut out the one breath of air that has blown all day? Leave that alone, and put the curtain as it was before."

Starting round to see what mischief he had done, his toe caught against the high stool on which the hurt foot was resting. The touch hardly moved it, but another sharp word or two about his "stupid carelessness" was spoken, and feeling quite disheartened he set to work to rearrange the curtain, thinking a quiet, patient temper, was better worth possessing, even though unlike uncle, than all the warmth and eagerness he had been pleased to consider as their joint characteristics. Oswald saw his look. "Hu., should you mind fetching that black book in my room, and reading me a chapter?"

"Why, uncle, you said reading worried you."

"It is myself that is worrying me, and you, too, I think. It is absurd going on like this. Fetch the book, and perhaps it may force me to quietness a bit. You didn't think my temper was so bad before, did you?" he said, drawing him towards him as he passed round on his way to the next room. "I am sorry I have been so hasty with you, Hu."

"Oh, don't, uncle! I can't bear your saying you are sorry to me, ever. You know you say I am nobody, so say what you like to me, as if I were a post."

"Impatience must have a feeling victim to make it sinful: is that your doctrine? Do you remember Cox's lecture to us last Christmas Day, on the breaking in of restive animals? He'd say I wanted it. Get the book, there's a good boy, and I will practise patience the length of a chapter."

Hubert read softly, sorrowing now as much to see the constraint his uncle was putting upon himself, as he sat upright with tightly pressed lips, or leaned back with his eyes shut, as before at the sight of his complaining irritability and restlessness, and he would have been better pleased to hear a few sharp words. Two or three times he stopped,

thinking he was only doing penance in listening; but a quick 'Go on' kept him to his task. As he was finishing, May looked in to say that Mr. Prescott had just come in to ask after uncle, and she had come up to see if he might like to see him now, if he was feeling any better. He hasn't said anything about coming up, so you need not mind saying No."

"Thank you, May: ask him to come, but give him a hint not to stay long."

"May, uncle has done it!" Hubert said, as they went out of the room and left Oswald alone with the clergyman.

"Done what?" asked the girl.

"Why, been as patient and plucky as anyone. I knew he could if he liked. He has never said a word of fuss through all that," showing the thickness of the pages he had read.

May laughed. "Poor uncle, I think you were cruel to inflict it on him."

"He would have it. I shall never think anything he does again is anything else than just that he doesn't think about a thing."

"What is that remarkable determination?" said Mr. Maynard, coming up to them on the stairs. "I hope your sister understands your lucid language."

"Pretty nearly," she said. "He is never going to be surprised at anything uncle does again, even if he takes to disliking himself."

"You may laugh, May, but even if he went so far as that, I should either know it was my fault, which it never shall be, or else that uncle wasn't thinking about what was right just at the time, and would come all right when he had begun to recollect."

A few words from the girl explained the subject of their talk to the tutor. "And Hu. thinks if a man is really good he can never go on doing a wrong thing when he recollects himself. He was nearly disbelieving in poor uncle's good-

ness altogether this afternoon, because he was snappish with pain."

Hubert shook his head, saying, "Mr. Maynard knows better than to believe that. But don't you agree with me, sir?"

"Grant that any man hold such a standard of goodness as you once told me was yours, and also the hope which urged to the reaching it, and I certainly should; but there are many men who talk of and indulge that hope, without the consequence you draw from its possession, of continuous effort for its attainment in the present time. Few care to strive for an object only gained by such self-mortification as this involves, even though the hope to find it theirs hereafter may exist."

"Then they have no right to hope for it, that I see," said the boy, decidedly.

"Why not?"

Hubert stopped a minute to think of his answer, which, when he had found, he felt half shy of speaking. "Mr. Maynard, you know the people that do hope for it truly are just the ones who hate what made them once have no hope; if one loved *that* still, one would be telling a lie to say one hoped for the other."

"You say truly. To own perfection as your hope, and then in practice be content with wilful imperfection, would mark a hypocrite."

The tutor looked at Hubert fixedly a minute, and then turned away, repeating to himself, "What made them once have no hope,—rightly described?"

"What is it you are talking of?" May asked, when he was out of hearing; but Hubert gave her no answer, and ran downstairs.

The three o'clock train had never been so anxiously longed for by any at the Park as on that Monday afternoon. Any certainty would be better than the continuance of the dread of a possible life's lameness, which was quite as much

the cause of Oswald's suffering as the unchanging, acute pain. Dr. Scott had spoken hopefully, but he was not a surgeon, and the ship's doctors had all along been of opinion that the injury was of too complicated a nature to admit of cure, and that the foot must go.

When it dawned upon Hubert what the result of that afternoon might be, and he remembered his rejoicings when the first news of the accident reached him, he fell into an agony of self-accusation, blaming himself that he could have thought of himself at all, calling himself cruel and selfish, and ending by declaring that it had never entered his head that uncle's foot was really in danger.

"Then I don't see what reason you have for blaming yourself," reasoned his tutor; and sent him off to the Grange, with the command to stay out till tea time. "Take Godfrey with you, and tell Osbert to go too."

Hubert would have resisted; but he had no appeal. His father was sitting in his uncle's room, and he had been forbidden to go there again. He thought no hours had ever seemed so long in his life before, as those he passed that afternoon; and Geraldine at last suggested that they should order O'Hara's carriage, and all go together to the Park and amuse themselves in the woods, till Hubert might go to the house and bring them word what had happened.

With beating heart he stepped into the hall as the clock struck six, and began creeping up the stairs, dreading, yet longing, to find someone to question.

"Then on no account be late to-morrow," he heard his father's voice saying above him; and Dr. Scott's in answer, "Certainly not: and be sure you keep him quiet," as he hurried downstairs.

"Ah, here is the unfledged doctor!" he cried, catching sight of Hubert: "one may always be certain to find him hovering somewhere near, wherever I am wanted." But it was no time to bear joking just then, as the good-natured doctor saw when he came near him, and saw the effort he

made to ask the question, which seemed to choke him. "You needn't be frightened, my man: we have every hope he will be all right soon, and have two feet as good as each other, if one perhaps is not quite so shapely."

"Oh, thank you, sir! Then he won't be lame, and he won't have to give up the sea!" and with the sudden relief from fear, which had grown stronger the more time he had had to think, he turned away to hide his tears.

"Come, come, Hu.: were you so frightened for him? Maynard shouldn't have sent you off for so long if I had thought you had taken it to heart like this."

"Oh, papa, think of uncle lame, and not a sailor any longer!"

"Why you would have always had him at home then: but, indeed, we have all great cause to thank God he has been spared," Mr. Raymond added, earnestly. "I can hardly imagine anyone who would have suffered more under such a loss than a man so active as your uncle, independently of all it might have involved. You may go in and see him for five minutes, but you must be very quiet, for he has gone through a great deal; and don't make him talk."

The joyful greeting, in a voice faint from exhaustion, "Well, Hu., you must look up my bat again," was answered by Hubert with a bear-like hug, eliciting a mild remonstrance. Question and answer soon filled up the few minutes, and Hubert told of his promise to Geraldine and O'Hara to go back to the wood and tell them how he was before they went home.

"Are they waiting? Thank her, and tell her I shall hope now soon to be able to come and see her; and give Harry my love, and say that as soon as I get out he shall drive with me as long as I have to use the carriage. But you must go now, dear boy: it makes me faintish talking."

"Why, uncle, isn't the pain gone now? Though, do you know, you really look worse than before he came."

Oswald smiled. "Did you think I had had the visit of a

prophet, to heal with a touch? No : it is dreadful just now. But who cares, with such a hope as he has given me : a few weeks, and then freedom, and an unspoilt life still ; and all that I care for most mine yet." His voice faltered a moment with the fulness of thankful feeling the boy could hardly understand, and then he lay silent, and Hubert, kissing his forehead, stepped softly from the room.

Some weeks passed away after the surgeon's visit, and at last it was decided that the promise to O'Hara might be carried out. Oswald landed himself in safety in the open carriage, where a cushion-covered board was placed at his side for the child, and Hubert sat opposite his uncle, with a face full of happiness. At the door of the Grange Colonel Dennis appeared, carrying his son, and Geraldine beside him.

"Why is it I have not seen you before?" Oswald asked, as she came round to his side of the carriage. "I felt quite neglected to hear you passing the drawing-room door with May, the day I came down, and not coming in to say how-dye-do."

"Mr. Raymond told me you disliked seeing visitors, so I would not come," said she.

"Well please don't consider yourself a visitor, Miss Dennis," he said, as the carriage turned, "and take compassion on me, and come in next time, for I am not up to paying visits yet. There is my punishment for shirking seeing people I don't care for," he added, laughing, to Hubert as they rolled away.

Those happy June and July days : Hubert never forgot them. He had never enjoyed the companionship he cared for most as he now did, when no outdoor work called his uncle away, and when all day long he had him always at hand. He often wondered at the kind thoughtfulness his tutor showed for his pleasure, sending him up to prepare a difficult piece of work with Oswald's help instead of his, or telling him he might read with him. "If Mr. Raymond likes to play tutor, it will rub up his Latin," he said.

Oswald was glad of the occupation, and very happy was the daily hour so passed together, though perhaps the quantity of Latin studied was not so great as if Hubert had stayed downstairs. But Mr. Maynard never remarked on it, and was satisfied when his weekly examination tested it.

Then there were the long drives which Hubert every now and then obtained leave to share, though his father would wonder at him that he cared to go. "I thought you hated driving, Hu., and that it was only fit for ladies. I have always thought you very condescending when you would come with me."

Hubert's answer was more true than complimentary. "Yes, papa: but then you know driving always puts you half asleep, while with uncle and Harry we have great fun."

"Yes: uncle's powers of talking do beat mine, I grant you," said his father.

When the need for the carriage was over, and Oswald's foot could bear the stirrup again, long rides took the place of the drives, when he and his brother, and May and Hubert, often with Geraldine as well, went off for hours; Mr. Raymond generally turning back half way, and the others going on where the girls and Hubert had never explored before, but where Oswald could act as a guide; and Hubert wondered that Mr. Maynard never grumbled, however late they were in returning. Oswald was not fond of riding, calling it stupid work, and never joined them.

"Harry can hardly refrain from wishing your foot unfit for a boot still, Mr. Raymond," Geraldine was saying when they had come back later than usual, and she had stayed to take tea at the Park, and they were chatting together afterwards in the drawing-room.

"Yes, poor little boy, he must miss his drives I am afraid," said Oswald: "Shall we send the carriage down for him to-morrow? Mrs. Wibmer could go with him. We won't suggest your going, or we should be the losers."

"No," said Geraldine: "it is your company, I am afraid,

he misses more than the drives, thank you. You see you give him something fresh to think about, and are second favourite after Hubert."

"I will go and see him to-morrow. I cannot take to driving again: it is no exercise, which is the thing I need."

Geraldine left them to ride home a few minutes after, with Hubert as attending squire; and Mr. Maynard, who had been sitting in the window reading, looked up, saying, "Would not the best plan for the little boy's happiness, and indeed for everyone's, be a continuance of the visit that was interrupted so unfortunately last winter?"

"How? Why they stayed longer than they expected," said May.

"Yes: but O'Hara lost his pleasure, if Mr. Raymond's company makes it. A renewal of the visit here would make him happier, I should think, than any occasional visits to himself. Excuse my interfering in making such a suggestion: I merely wished to say that if you thought of such a thing I would give the boys their summer holidays at once, while Mr. Raymond is at home, instead of later, as last year, if their father consented."

May looked across at her uncle, laughing with surprise, while Oswald exclaimed, "Thank you, Mr. Maynard. A more sensible thought could not have entered anyone's head."

"I thought you would like the idea," said the tutor, with more kindness than he usually showed in his half-smile, when, as Maxwell used to say, he allowed to one half of his mouth what he refused to the other.

"Ask your father, May," Oswald, said eagerly.

Mr. Raymond was asked and gave ready consent, as did Colonel Dennis, and Mr. Maynard was voted a general benefactor.

"You won't go away somewhere?" Hubert asked him, as he was standing with his hands clasped behind his back, looking from the library window at the happy laughing children, running wild in their joy at the holiday just proclaimed.

"You would rather I should," said the tutor: "but I have nowhere to go to now, unless I were to take lodgings in town, and have a few weeks' reading at the Museum."

He had turned to him with a face so sad that Hubert's answer was doubled in warmth: "You know I don't want you to, or why should I have asked? You must come about with us, and not stay poking in here always,—do, Mr. Maynard! You don't mind very much not having any teaching to do, do you?" he added.

"I am always best pleased to be fully employed; but I like to see you happy, and I have some writing I shall be glad to finish."

Hubert was called and went, longing to be able to find some way of cheering that sad face, and rejoicing as he thought of the difference of feeling in which these holidays and those of last year were entered upon.

"Mr. Maynard is quite different from what he used to be: don't you think so?" he said, as Oswald was resting on a garden seat in the morning sunshine after a half-hour's exercise of his newly returning power of walking.

"He is more *like* what he used to be, I should say," was the answer.

"Uncle, you never told me how it was that you knew him before, and that papa didn't: I wish you would now.

"Well, I suppose there could be no harm in it, for he knows that you have heard from me that we were friends in old days. It seems queer talking of friendship when I was only a boy of your age, but very true friendship it was nevertheless. This was how it came about: only remember he has some very strong feeling against your father or anyone knowing his identity with my old friend, so you must hold your tongue, though I wish it could all come out by accident, and make it possible to treat him frankly. I was a little fellow about seven, if I remember rightly. Yes, it was the year Maude was born, and she is nineteen. We,—your father, mother, and I,—had been travelling in Scotland,

and on our way down stopped at the house of a Mr. Churchill, in Cumberland. We were to spend a week there, when the very day we arrived my brother received letters which made it necessary for him to hurry home to make arrangements at once for leaving for Jamaica. Your mother returned with him; but I was left because of a cough or cold, or something; perhaps to have me out of the way. I was being thoroughly spoilt up there, and enjoying my freedom from all control, when a day's illness ended for Mr. Churchill in death. It was then that Mr. Maynard, whom I had seen once or twice before, came over and offered to take me from the darkened house to his own, and let me companionize with his little brother and sister. The change was delightful to me, for his house was just above the sea. I wish you could see it, Hu.: the coast is magnificent. I have always fancied it just the place for a sailor's home. It must have been heart-breaking grief to him to leave it. He was quite young then, just past twenty-four, and he lived there with the two little ones and an elderly cousin, who acted as lady guardian to the children and kept house for them all. He loved those two as I have never seen man love brother or sister since, and was looking forward to the ending of his time at Oxford, to be with them wholly. I stayed there several weeks. He was the first man I had ever had much to do with, except your father, and he was always occupied with his books and the place, and magistrate's work, in those days."

"I wonder if he will ever go back to that sort of thing again?" said Hubert.

"Perhaps in a year or two; but never while this fixed melancholy acts on his health in the way it does now. Dr. Scott tells me he is much feebler: that illness in the spring, and the shock about Maude, have told on him seriously. I wish he would go abroad for a few months, and try what"—

"He won't do that, uncle," Hubert interrupted. "Dr. Scott has proposed it more than once; but he says he won't

this year. I wish with all my heart he would. But now go on with your story," he added, hastily.

"There is not much of a story to tell, Hu. Mrs. Churchill had taken a fancy to me ; and when your father and mother left home for some months, in the early part of next year, on account of her health, Mrs. Churchill proposed that I should come and spend the time with her children ; and I was with the Maynards constantly. John, as I soon learned to call him, as his brother and sister did, liked my company for Kenneth, and Kenneth attached himself to me. They were very happy days. Mr. Maynard was always about with us, and little Lilian too. Not a year passed after that that I did not spend a month or two at Mrs. Churchill's, who was thankful to have a hardy boy to put some pluck and boyish spirit into her very dull son, before he went to school. For the last two visits I went to join him during his holidays, when Harrow life had knocked a little boyishness into him. My last stay was a long one : the end of it with the Maynards alone, at their house. And, oddly enough, it was John, and not my brother, who sent me off to sea. Scarlet fever was running through this house ; and, of course, I could not return to it. Many were my tears, big boy as I was, at not being able to have your mother's farewell, and at the bitter disappointment of not being able to show myself to her, and to my brother, in the new uniform, which had to be sent to the North to me. It was even Mr. Maynard who did the father's part of giving the last counsels and warnings ; for no letters might be sent from home, for fear of the infection. I was very low in spirits, as you may think ; and his kindness was all the more valued and warmly remembered. He drove me himself to their distant railway station, saw me on the way to the uncle who was to meet me at Portsmouth ; and I never saw him or heard of him again, till we met last year, in the library."

"How was that, uncle ? I have so often wondered ; and how it was papa didn't know him."

"Your father had never seen him, and, naturally, would never have thought of connecting the idea of a needy man, seeking employment, with the Mr. Maynard who had constantly entertained me on his own estate ; the name, too, is not an uncommon one."

"But how was it you never heard of him again?"

"Ay : I little thought, when we parted at that station, that it would be thirteen years that we should never interchange a word. I don't know what was the cause. I did my part as to writing, though not very promptly ; for my home letters just, at first, used up my industry. But I never got any answer ; and I wrote many times, unable to believe that his silence was intentional. Through Mrs. Churchill I might have heard of him ; but she had married again, and gone to India. I turned indignant with him at last, and ceased my efforts. He told me last summer that he had received my letters ; but would give no reason for his silence, nor would he allow me to refer to old days. You know now more of him than I do."

"I often and often wonder, uncle, what can be the thing that he has done that makes him always so miserable ; for I do think, from the way he has spoken many times, that it is something he has done, much more than all he has lost, that makes him so."

"Do you think so? Why? Surely loss of wife and child, brother and sister, and home, with poverty added, may be considered enough to bring misery."

"Of course I don't know how all that would make one feel ; but I don't think that *you*, now, could ever get as Mr. Maynard is,—miserable through and through. I know he has done some very wrong thing that he can't forgive himself for, particularly from what he said, when" —— Hubert stopped, and then added, "I don't think, though, I ought to speak about that, even to you."

Oswald looked at him surprised. "Why, has he taken you into his confidence?"

"No. But he said things to me, when he was so miserable and ill, and hardly knew what he was about, that he wouldn't think of saying now, and wouldn't like me to repeat, I think ; though it seems odd to think there can be anything not right to tell you, uncle," the boy added, half apologetically.

"Nay : the time must come, as you are growing up, and begin to enjoy friendship with others, that you will see that to no one, not even to the oldest and closest friend, you can any longer be entirely open, without betrayal of other's confidence."

"I have never had a thing I mightn't tell you before," said Hubert, looking as if he did not like it now.

"But that could not go on, Hu., unless you were to live a very selfish life. I hope you will have many things by-and-by you may not tell to me. I only bargain always to know all that concerns yourself, as friend-in-chief."

"I should think you always would, uncle," Hubert began, vehemently, meeting Oswald's look with a frank smile ; then suddenly colouring violently, rose, saying, "But now, if you have rested long enough, do come and see the bullfinch you gave Harry : he brought it with him yesterday, and wants to show you how tame it is."

"Yes : I am ready."

Oswald was not generally quick at noticing little things ; but he could not help wondering, as he took hold of Hubert's shoulder, at the sudden check given to their conversation, an employment he was usually eager to prolong, at the unnaturally grave set his face took, when the flush passed off, and at his silence during their slow progress to the house. He watched his face, as he had done often lately ; but said nothing.

Hubert left him at the breakfast-room door, and went upstairs ; and though the bullfinch performed its best, and O'Hara was looking towards the door every minute, wondering why Hu. did not come, it was a long time before he appeared, and the bird had been returned to its cage.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CRICKET MATCH.

“What will you choose to be, my son,
Soldier, or statesman, or priest?
Will you sail where the ocean’s crown is won?
Or for gold, to the burning East?”

MOST of O’Hara’s time during his stay at the Park was passed in the garden, where his couch was drawn within the shade of a large ash upon the lawn. There Oswald, too, found a tempting resting-place, and spent many days of returning strength on the grass, reading or drawing, with his back against the stem of the tree. It naturally became the chief meeting-place for every member of the family, and it was there they had gathered on the Sunday evening at the end of the first week of the holidays. The great wish of O’Hara’s heart had been fulfilled that day. It was a wish he had never thought to see realized, and when the question was asked, “Harry, should you like to come to church this afternoon?” “How can I?” was his startled question.

“As I must: in the carriage. I can walk now as far as from the gate, and you can be carried. We will go early, as I have no wish to be a gazing stock.”

O’Hara had no such fears, and was happily unconscious of the many curious eyes fixed upon the Park pew that afternoon. His thoughts were wholly occupied with the

service, as Hubert found his places for him, and he followed each word with fixed attention.

"I shall never forget his face," Oswald said to his brother, as they stood with Hubert and Geraldine on the front steps, when O'Hara was carried in after their return. "Did you notice him, Miss Dennis, as we were singing the second hymn? He sang those words,—

"How dread are Thine eternal years,
O everlasting Lord!
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored,"—

as one of those very spirits might,—not for his weak notes, but with the look that an angel might."

"Weren't you fancying, Oswald?" said his brother, smiling. "It is much more probable, dear little man, that he was wondering what the pictures were on the windows: he could hardly have understood the meaning of such words, I think."

"I wasn't looking at him," said Geraldine; "but I think he could have understood them."

"I was," said Hubert: "and I know he did."

He too would never forget the look in the face he had bent over, as he sat by him to share the hymn-book, nor the tear-dimmed eyes that had been lifted to his when the last verse ended. It made him keep the place in the hymn-book, and spend the first few minutes of the sermon in reading over the words which had so moved his companion. He never heard them again without a vision of that afternoon's occupation of their pew rising before his eyes, and the sound of the soft notes in the plaintive air returning to his ears, as they followed in the words:—

"How wonderful, how beautiful
The sight of Thee must be;
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
And awful purity.

"O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears ;
And worship Thee, with trembling hope
And penitential tears.

"Yet I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art,
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.

"No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother, ere so mild,
Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done
With me, Thy sinful child.

"Father of Jesus, love's reward,
What rapture will it be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
And ever gaze on Thee !"

It had been no lip worship offered at his side, and as he laid down the hymn book he looked back with wonder to the day when the same voice had confessed with melancholy regret, "I don't love Him, Hu.;" and had spoken the dread which caused the regret: "To think of having to die one day, and go to Him without loving Him."

The shadow from the ash was a long one in the evening sunshine, the trembling leaves marking flickering lights and shades over O'Hara as he lay near its stem. His sister and May sat close together reading out of the same book, and Oswald lay on the grass telling of Hottentots and Kaffirs, as they talked over the book—an account of African missions. The children played round the couch, till their elder brothers exciting them to a state of noisy romps, their uncle called them to order, and they were soon hanging about him, petitioning for stories, not hard to find from the subject in hand. Then the little ones were summoned with the unwelcome announcement of bedtime, and Osbert was not long in following, taking his way to the back premises, more hopeful of fun near the stable-yard door than in the Sunday quiet on the lawn. Hubert found a stool, and

seated himself with his elbow near O'Hara's head, and his cheek on his hand, and so sat for the greater part of half an hour, not opening his lips; his companion as silent as himself. More than once his uncle looked round at him on the point of asking some question, but each time looked back again without speaking, with the secret desire to see how long he would remain silent and motionless. He was vexed when May spoiled his experiment by exclaiming, in a pause of their own conversation, "Really, you two, what can you find to enjoy sitting like that, without saying a word!"

Hubert started; while O'Hara exclaimed, "I wish you wouldn't interrupt us, May: we were so comfortable."

They all laughed, Geraldine asking, "What did she interrupt?"

"Our meditations," he answered. "Now go on with your own affairs."

But the move had been made, and May said she must go in and give papa and Mr. Maynard their tea. "Shall you come, uncle?"

"I don't know: this air is even better than your tea. Now what were the meditations about?" he asked, as the girls turned away. "May I know?"

"I mustn't tell you mine; so you know without the telling," said Hubert, standing up, and to his uncle's surprise walking after his sister.

"What, with such a grave face, Hu.?" he said. But Hubert either did not hear, or did not wish to answer, for he went on without speaking.

The sun had set when he appeared again with a message from his father. "Papa says, uncle, that you ought not to be staying on the grass when the dew is falling; that you will be getting rheumatism in your foot, with only a slipper on, and that it isn't right for Harry."

"Your father is a kind old coddle, Hu. I should like him to show me where the dew is. We are just coming in.

Tell me again, Harry, what were you saying? Here, let me sit behind you a few minutes."

"It is difficult to say exactly what I mean," the child said, slowly; and Hubert saw from his face and voice that he had been crying. "What has been the matter?" he asked, anxiously. "It isn't your side again, is it?"

"No: I foolishly spoke of what it is wisest to forget," said Oswald. While O'Hara said, sadly, "It was I who was foolish, not you: but I cannot bear to think of it."

Hubert knew what he meant by the sudden seizure of his hand, and said hastily, "Then don't, Harry: I hate thinking of it every bit as much as you do."

"Then why should you go?" asked the child, eagerly; "though Mr. Oswald says I am not to say that."

"No: of course not. A man or boy must get to his work out in the world, however much pain the first start may give to himself, or to those that love him: he can't take a woman's place, to stay at home and be petted, or devote himself to caring for others." He looked hard at his nephew as he spoke, and Hubert's eyes were fixed on him eagerly.

There was a little pause, and then the boy said, decidedly, "No: certainly not. That is true enough: it *would* be filling a woman's place."

His heart grew lighter as he spoke; it had been sinking with increasing fear through the past month. Sometimes, once and again, his spirits would rise, and his fears seem to himself like phantoms he had conjured up without cause; but still hopes and fears were both without any clearly seen foundation. He never summoned courage to seek the ground for either, and both in consequence were raised or overthrown by a word or thought. For days he was excited, never still a moment, in wild spirits, and seeming the happiest of the happy; while at other times he would mope about by himself, giving himself up to fits of despairing misery, or falling into long silences, so unlike himself that

it was only because every one else in the house was preoccupied with their own interests that he escaped notice. His uncle's he did not escape. He was never ill-tempered, only in a state of brooding preoccupation, and a word or call from Oswald or O'Hara would make him forget himself and be happy; but sometimes it was as much as he could do to resist the longing to talk it all out with the one who would be certain to confirm all his hopes, and crush his fears out of sight. Sunday was one of the worst times for him,—missing the work and active pleasures of other days; and words of prayer, Scripture and collect, or passages in the sermon which would once have passed over unheeding ears, now stood out, speaking with loud warning tones, or recalling hopes and resolves to mind, which it seemed to him now he was hastening forward to lose and break.

His uncle's present decided words were seized on greedily; and it was with more brightness than he had spoken all day that he said, "But what was it, Harry, that you were telling uncle? You'll let me hear, too: won't you?"

"You see we were talking of what we had better have let alone," said Oswald. "And then we were thinking of what could comfort even in the worst partings; and Harry has his own ideas on the subject."

"Yes, Mr. Oswald, you see, *you* say just as Gerry does: we must look forward to meeting again, or else that it is God's will, and so must be borne. That is quite true; but I want something more. - I want to be happy always; and I must be satisfied to be that."

"And I don't understand what you mean, my boy. If you want Hu., how can you be satisfied without him?"

"Only by having something that cannot go, that I love more than him," said the child, looking up with soft serious eyes at his questioner. "It was just so when Dermot went: I had Hu."

"And how will it be this time? Is it that you have your sister left?"

"Oh, Mr. Oswald! I have always had Gerry: how could she make up for Hu.? No: what I want is, to care most for what I can never lose; then when others, that I want besides, go from me, I shall stay satisfied, you see. Like what David said in that verse, 'There is none upon earth I desire beside Thee.' You see he wanted no one more; and he said he had what he wanted most,—'God *is* my portion for ever.' I think he was satisfied: now, wasn't he? Yes Hu.," he added, with a smile, "even when Jonathan was lost."

He lay silent, looking out over the park, where all was growing dim, to the still silvery bright sky.

Surprised at his words, Oswald asked, "And do you mean, then, Harry, that you can say that, too? Do you know what David meant by those words?"

The child looked up at him, saying, "I think that hymn in church to-day said all the reasons why He is better than anything I can lose: don't you? I only wish I could always hear it, to keep me in mind. I know I could always feel right if I could always be reminded of what I know; but I forget so."

Oswald wondering greatly at his answers, repeated the words, "'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: ' isn't that it?"

"That says it just right," said O'Hara. "Never thirsting is being always satisfied. One may like other things, and wish for them; but one will never *need* them."

They were all three silent for a few minutes; and then Oswald moved, saying they ought to go in. "And, Harry, you mustn't think that you need the reminding of anything like a hymn to keep you joyful always, in the way you wish: Jesus has purposed for us 'that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.' He hangs that joy on only one *if*."

"What is that, Mr. Oswald?"

"'If ye keep my commandments: ' that is our part; the

rest He will take care of for us, and give us always that joy which, you say rightly, leaves us satisfied when all else is lost, and without which, when it has once been known, the heart of a child of God is desolate, though all other joys were to be crowded upon him." Neither boy made any answer, silent with very different thoughts; and Oswald, standing up, said, "You were quite right, Harry, in seeking better comfort than I suggested. May God keep you satisfied in the way you wish; and Hu., and me, too," he added, as he saw Hubert's eyes cast down, and a look of trouble about his mouth. He put his hand on his shoulder, saying, with meaning, "But let us remember how such joy is joined to obedience. I will send one of the men to you, Harry. I wish I were able to carry you myself. Lend me your shoulder, Hu."

They had reached the porch before he spoke again; and then, catching the sound of a song of Handel's, he sent Hubert to find a bearer for O'Hara, and with a hearty, "Poor little fellow, it shan't be my fault if he doesn't have some enjoyment to look back upon, now," made the best of his way to the drawing-room, where he submitted meekly to his brother's reproaches, obliged to own his foot was paining him, as he sat nursing it over his knee, but denying the dampness of the grass the cause. "No: I have had rather more walking to-day; and I have been overdoing the riding, I think, and shall take to the carriage again for a few days."

So his little companion enjoyed himself once more, as Oswald meant he should, and Mr. Raymond commended his return to prudence as he put his own foot in the stirrup; while the tutor, lingering in the hall watching Oswald mount the two girls, sympathizing not a little with the regretful looks that followed the blue and black habits till they were out of sight. "Just the same kind-hearted, unselfish fellow he always was," he said to himself; and added the wish aloud, "I hope your foot may reap the benefit of your self-denial, Mr. Raymond."

"Thank you : it is doing so already," Oswald answered. "Come with us, Mr. Maynard. Harry and I are going round to have a look at the boys' cricketing, and settle about the match for next Tuesday. A drive would do you more good than your slow walking."

The Tuesday match was the great event of the holidays, when the Raymond Stoke eleven challenged the Canworth eleven, and tents were pitched upon the park slopes, and Oswald treated them all to a grand luncheon, and Colonel Dennis sent his contribution of a case of champagne, to drink their entertainer's health.

The sun shone cloudless when the morning came ; and the happiness of all the merry party was complete when Geraldine and May, in their soft muslins and shady hats, appeared, the last for whom they need wait, and they could start for the lower part of the park. There Oswald, who was to resume for the day his old post of captain, was already choosing the ground, and explaining to O'Hara the mysteries of the game. Hubert's pity reached its utmost limit when he heard his avowal that he did not know what they wanted to do with the ball.

"Well, you will know when you see it in Hubert's hand. Young Rowlands tells me you are their crack bowler now, Hu."

"It is very generous of him to own it," said Hubert, laughing ; "for he hates me like fun. Remember, uncle, I am to make your runs for you."

The slopes round the tents were soon well covered. There had been no gay doings at the Park for so long, that no one who could come stayed away ; and Oswald declared himself tired of repeating his thanks to the congratulations on his recovery. May called his growling ungrateful, but admitted that he had heard enough about his foot by the time his second innings were near, and he was resting by O'Hara. They were all talking together when they heard Mr. Raymond's voice behind them, saying, "Here they

are." He had not joined them before ; and May sprang up, to give him her seat, when a soft voice greeted her.

"Ah, dear May : I was looking for you all ; but there are so many here, it was hard to get to you. I wanted to congratulate your two invalids on being able to be out."

Oswald had started from his chair, looking round with a darkened brow in search of his walking stick, evidently meditating an escape ; but the greetings to O'Hara over, a hand was held out to him, with the words, "Ah, here is the other ! Now, don't be standing, pray, Mr. Raymond : you are not fit yet to be minding civilities," as he handed her the chair he had been using. "Do sit down at once. And why don't you keep your foot up ? You ought to. Do send Godfrey for a chair for it."

"I am afraid, Miss Yorke, they would hardly admit it in front of our wickets, where I shall be wanted in a few minutes, if I am not mistaken," he answered, watching the course of the game.

"Why, you are never playing !" she exclaimed, for the first time noticing his dress. "Isn't that madness : when you are only just convalescent ?"

His brother echoed, "Madness indeed ! But it is no use cautioning him."

"Ah : I thought so !" cried Oswald, not heeding, as a shout rose round the wickets. And, with a parting nod to O'Hara, and lifting his cap to the two ladies, he went away, stepping more firmly, and with more even tread, than he had done since the day he had first put his foot to the ground, and swinging his stick, as though unneeded.

Mr. Raymond looked annoyed, saying, "When Oswald gets near a bat and stumps, he can think of nothing else ;" while O'Hara looked after his big friend regretfully, till he turned at the question, in Miss Yorke's voice, "And when does he leave you ?"

"In a few weeks, I think ; but he is not quite sure. He has written again, and hopes to hear definitely in a day or

two," he answered ; while the listening child rose eagerly on his elbow. "Unless, indeed," he added, "he lays himself up with this foolish over-exertion."

"Did you say a few weeks?" O'Hara asked ; while Geraldine's hand on his shoulder pressed him back, and she called his attention to the game.

"You should be watching now, for Hubert is playing."

He turned his head with a sigh ; but next minute exclaimed, "Oh, what a shame ! That boy with the red cap has caught his ball, when he had just given it such a hit !" And Hubert was soon among them, joining the laugh at O'Hara's indignation.

"Uncle is so angry with me !" he cried, throwing himself down on the grass. "But Symes will make it up." He was brimming over with happiness and excitement, and only answered O'Hara's dolefully-whispered announcement by, "Don't think about it, then. Let us forget such things, and be jolly while we can. Why, what is the matter now, May?" he added, aloud, looking round at the sound of his sister's voice, raised between surprise and displeasure.

"Why, here is Miss Yorke asking when I am to go to school : fancy such a thing ! You won't listen to her, papa : will you?"

"Indeed, my dear," her father answered, "Miss Yorke is quite right in what she says,—that intercourse with other girls would be very useful to you. It is bad for you keeping you buried here, and it is not giving you the advantages your sister had."

"But just think of her leaving papa and us. How can you dream of such a thing, Miss Yorke?" exclaimed Hubert, starting up.

"Oh, I am not advising it, Hubert : you needn't flash out at me like that," she said, with a pat on his shoulder, and he threw himself down again.

But May protested. "And what good were they to her. I don't want any advantages, papa, whatever they may mean,

that lead to such—No, papa: I will never leave you. I can't do much, but I am eldest at home, and I won't go away, even if I wished it."

"That is just what one would expect dear, good little May to say," said Miss Yorke, looking at her with a smile, as the father answered, "No, my May, I am quite sure you would never wish to leave me; but masters coming once a week are not the same as you would have at school, and the regular work would do you good; but believe me, I no more like the thought of parting with you than you do of going."

"I never could have thought,"—the girl began, then stopping short: "but there is no use in talking about horrid things like that now. Come, Geraldine, I want to go and speak to some of the people. Papa and the Miss Yorkes can take care of Harry for a little. There is Mrs. Rowlands over there, with her two dear little girls."

Hubert at the same time jumped up, exclaiming at the sight of Mr. Cox, and announced his intention of going to frighten him by telling him he was to take the place of a disabled cricketer. "May, you will go to school as sure as fate," he said as he passed the two girls.

"What makes you say so?" she asked, detainiug him.

"Because if people once get talking of a detestable plan like that, it is certain to be," he said; while Geraldine, laughing, added, "Yes: like your going to sea."

He ran on then, and May said, despairingly, "Do you know I feel as if he is right. Oh, what shall I do! Where is uncle? I must run and ask him to plead with papa for me."

"Nonsense, May! what are you thinking of? We can't go pushing in after him, among all those men and boys," Geraldine remonstrated. "Miss Yorke would think she was right if she saw you,—that you needed to go to school. Why couldn't she be quiet?"

"Yes, if uncle dislikes her for nothing, I shall take to disliking her for something: persuading papa to such cruelty! But I'll make uncle stand up for me."

Geraldine shook her head. "I am afraid your uncle would have no power to persuade Mr. Raymond against Miss Yorke's advice. He likes her so very much, you see, and would naturally think she knew most about the matter."

"Yes: and he knows uncle would naturally advise contrary to what she said," May answered, so seriously that Geraldine laughed. "I hope you don't think quite so badly of him as that."

"No: but he is prejudiced against her, though I never could think why, and he never will say, and pretends to be quite friendly."

"He said once that he disliked cats, when I said something about her," laughed Geraldine; "and that he preferred my snapping spaniel."

May laughed too, as she stood making holes in the ground with her parasol. "What if Miss Yorke should advise Colonel Dennis to send you as well? That would make it bearable."

"I should like to see anyone, even kind Miss Yorke, try to advise *my* father," said Geraldine. "No: you see, Mr. Raymond likes to talk things over with her about you all, naturally, as she is his only lady friend near here with whom he seems really intimate, and she is so gentle and has sympathized so much with him through all his sorrow."

May looked up quickly at her as she finished speaking, their eyes met for a moment, and each girl's face burned suddenly with a crimson flush. "Oh, Geraldine, Geraldine!" May said low, her voice trembling. "Can that be the reason uncle will hardly speak to her? Oh, it must be!" she added, as she recalled the many instances of Oswald's marked avoidance of his brother's greatest friends. "What shall we do?" she asked, excitedly, the burning colour deepening in her cheek.

"You must try and forget what, after all, is only a fancy, May darling. It isn't right to Mr. Raymond even to have thought of it. I feel guilty even to have had the fancy."

The sound of an uneven tread upon the grass near them made both girls turn with conscious looks to meet Oswald's, as he advanced, no longer despising the use of his stick. "Well, you see, I did more than I promised," he cried. "But what is the matter? What are you alone for—May, anything wrong?"

His niece shook her head, and asked with feigned cheerfulness which did not deceive him, "How many was it, uncle? I am sorry we were so busy talking we never looked. I heard a great shouting and noise."

"Twelve beyond my promise," he said.

Both girls exclaimed in triumph, May adding, "But how white you are looking. Miss Yorke would say you had"—then with sudden recollection she coloured again, violently, ending abruptly, "You have tired yourself too much, I am sure."

"What is it, May? Something is the matter," he asked, sharply.

"Geraldine will tell you," she said. "I have been long enough reaching Mrs. Rowlands as it is," and turned away; while Oswald repeated his question, with an added tone of anxiety in his voice.

"Miss Yorke has been talking to Mr. Raymond about May's going to school, and he seems inclined to it, and she is upset about it."

"Oh, is that all?" and the sigh which followed was one of relief. "I am just going on to the beeches to rest a little. They don't want me just now," he added; and she walked on with him, relating what had passed, and May's hopes in his intercession. "It would be useless," he said; but I will do my best for her, poor dear child. Perhaps, however, if nothing more is said, he will forget about it when he is let alone." He stood silent thinking a minute, and Geraldine heard him murmur to himself, as he found a seat among the roots of a large tree, "Meddlesome Tabby!"

She could not help laughing. "I am afraid you like cats no better than you used."

"No: a great deal less," he said, as she turned to leave him. "Need you go? Please cause no more purring by saying I am resting. How can you stand it?"

"Oh, I have no antipathy to the sound," she answered, smiling; then added gravely, "but indeed, Mr. Raymond, if you won't mind my saying so, I do think you judge her hardly. The kindness is real which she feels, as I know well, though you mayn't like her way of showing it. You would have said so too if you had seen them at Malta. I shall never forget what she was to us then. I knew nothing then of comfort beyond such sympathy."

Oswald's bent brows made her fear she had assumed too much the tone of rebuke, and more lightly she added, "But perhaps to women sympathy is more welcome than to men; so I suppose I had better not advise, as I was going to, that you should change your place to those chesnuts, where there is turf to rest on."

"Advice much too sensible not to follow," Oswald said, rising. "I am very sorry I should have given you pain. I never thought of your feeling towards her: mine I find it difficult to overcome; but,"—he hesitated a moment,— "don't think it is only the being fussed over."

He looked as if he wanted to say more, but with a smile up at him saying merrily, "It must be hard to be called a convalescent invalid," she turned away; then summoning her courage she looked round again: "Please don't be vexed with me for saying it, but Hubert and May are beginning to think it must be something more than any such reason."

"Stay, Miss Dennis, what have they said? Tell me!" Far hotter than all his cricketing under the mid-day sun had made him he looked now.

"Nothing that I can tell you," she said, frightened at her own boldness; "but I love them like brother and sister, and thought it right to say so much. I hope I have not done wrong."

"You have acted as only a true friend would," he said,

earnestly. "I shall end by believing what I have more than once thought,—that my power of self-control is less than Hubert's. You must never be afraid to say whatever you will to me," he added, gently. "I will follow your advice in both cases. As soon as I have had a rest I will go and victimize myself."

"Please don't think I meant to give any advice, except about the best way to rest your foot."

Oswald's thoughts were more painful than his aching foot, as he threw himself at full length under the chesnut trees. Bitterly he upbraided himself for having allowed his feelings to show themselves. "Those children would never have dreamed of it else," he said, angrily; for he had instantly jumped to the conclusion from Geraldine's words that his nephew guessed the same as his niece and her friend. Miserably surer as he grew each day that he would soon no longer be able to feel his home a home for him, he was indignant with himself even to anger that he should have been the means of raising suspicion against his brother in his own daughter's mind. "As to Hubert, I don't care. It is best for him that he should know it, as it will put away altogether any idea he might else have had that he ought not to leave him." He was too restless to lie still long, and soon quitted his mossy couch to join his brother and the group of friends, which had increased in numbers during his absence.

May's fears were partly laid to rest before he left them again. She had stood by his side on her return from her ramble, listening with surprise to his quiet conversation with Miss Yorke on new varieties of roses, and his Good-bye, when at last he rose, had none of his usual stiffness in it. She did not see his half shame-faced glance at his counsellor as he bent over O'Hara, to ask him if he were tired, and would like to go in.

"Oh, no: not till I have seen the end. I hope you are going to play again."

"Yes : and I must make haste and relieve Johnson, who has taken my place, for he is a railway porter, and has to be back at his post : he had hoped we should have ended before this. I fear you must be wanting your tea, Harry."

"Yes : but who can think about wanting tea now ?" said the boy eagerly, much to his father's amusement, who, sitting near, was watching his happy face. "Oh, do go, Mr. Oswald, and bowl instead of that boy, or say that Hu. must : Dr. Scott's son has been in such a time."

"Ha ! I said no one but Hu. was to bowl for him. What is Johnson after ?" and Oswald was off, and O'Hara was soon rejoicing to see one of Hubert's swift balls send the stumps flying, and the rival captain's bat flung down.

The match was over at last, the cricketers dispersed among their friends, and talking and laughter filled the air.

"So here comes the conqueror !" Miss Yorke cried, as Hubert drew near them in the first flush of happy triumph, tossing the ball in his hand, and descanting on various styles of bowling to the late victim of his skill. His father leaning back in his chair watched him with fond pride as he drew up his head, answering the speaker, "There are no particular conquerors in cricket : the whole eleven conquer, and all help to it."

"Only I can tell you," said his companion, "if Mr. Raymond had left you to Johnson for ten minutes more, you would have had a different song to sing."

"True enough," laughed Hubert. "I was getting frantic : that little duffer Owen ! I was just off to hunt you up, uncle."

"We must give Harry, here, thanks for our victory, Charles," Oswald said. "It was he begged Hubert might be set to work ;" while Charles Scott answered, "Never mind, by next year Hubert will be out of the way, and we'll arrange our day before the 'Britannia' holidays begin."

"Will you, though !" retorted the other ; the younger Miss Yorke saying, "It is a shame to waste so good a cricketer upon a ship's deck."

"Is one of those two boys your son? I heard him say 'uncle' to your brother," asked an old gentleman at Mr. Raymond's side. "I did not think you had one so big."

"The one with the blue cap," was the satisfied rejoinder; "and he is not my eldest. Hubert, come and speak to an old friend of mine, who knew me when I was a baby."

"Oh, how exactly like his mother!" was the old man's exclamation, as Hubert turned to him with his bright face. "Her very self, when I first saw her about his age. Don't you see it?"

"See it!" repeated Mr. Raymond; and Oswald and the others began to speak all together, pitying the boy's embarrassing position, the centre of all eyes; but the old gentleman was not to be stopped, and went on, with his hand holding Hubert's: "Her very mouth! the same look of laughter lying ready in the corners. Yes, and the brown waving hair. Not her eyes, though: and her's were graver than your's, my boy, even in those early years. I hope nothing may come to dim the sparkle of your's; or if anything does, that you may find as good a comforter as she found here," laying his hand on Mr. Raymond's arm.

Hubert thought that though the white head of the speaker might call him to bear in respectful silence for himself, it did not for his father, and he turned quickly, saying, "We had a good fight for it, hadn't we, papa?" But before an answer could be given, "And are you on the 'Britannia,' did I hear?" he was asked.

"No, sir: I am not going till the autumn."

"It is not sure that he is going at all." His father spoke loud enough for all to hear. There was a little murmur; Oswald's eyebrows went up, and Miss Yorke's voice said, "Indeed, I thought it was quite a settled thing."

Mr. Raymond had risen, and was standing with his hand on his son's shoulder. "No: you know boys are fond of thinking of change," he said, looking at her; "but talking of things, and coming to the point of doing them, are very

different. There is more for Hubert to hesitate to leave, and to attract him homewards now, than in the old days, when he first pleased himself with the thought of turning sailor. I should never feel that a childish fancy was any guide for a boy's decision : that will be made on wise grounds, and thoughtfully, when the right time comes. But the end of a cricket match is not the time for choosing anyone's profession," he added, smiling, with a change of tone, as he felt the shoulder trembling under his hand, and heard Hubert's half-stifled words, "And you can't choose what is chosen already." Not noticing, he went on, "You are overheated, my boy, to be standing in this wind : it is rising. Go to the house and change your things, and ask anyone you like to join you at tea. I have ordered it to be laid in the breakfast room ; and, 'Bert, you go too."

Hubert's cheeks were burning, but not with heat. "I never catch cold, papa," he said, impatiently, "and I want to talk to Charles and the others."

"Take Charles back with you ; but do as I tell you. That thin shirt is no protection against this wind."

He went then, his friend excusing himself, saying that he had appointed to meet his father at the inn, that they might drive home together. Osbert went with his brother a few steps : he glanced up at him once or twice, wondering what thoughts were making his face so grave ; but he did not often venture on questioning him, and not finding his silence amusing, soon started off at a run. The old gentleman continued his reminiscences, while the rest of the party gradually dispersed, till Mr. Raymond asked him to stay to dinner, and walked off with him.

"Then I shall play little boy, Harry, and have tea with you. I am much too tired to sit through an hour of talk," said Oswald in O'Hara's ear ; an announcement causing shrieks of delight from the children, who were eluding Miss Sturt's efforts to collect them. O'Hara looked up, saying, "Mr. Oswald, he wouldn't have said there was laughter

lying ready in the corners of your mouth if he had looked at you while Mr. Raymond was saying that about Hu."

"Nor in Hu.'s, either: eh, Mr. Impudence?"

"I only hope he, and you, too, Mr. Raymond, will forget it if we are to have the honour of your company to tea," said Geraldine, as May moved, saying, "Miss Sturt, do you hear? Uncle Oswald is coming to tea: you and I had better go on at once and see if the cake is big enough."



CHAPTER XVIII.

SEED SOWN FOR SUSPICION.

That hope which was his inward bliss and boast,
For this one hope, he makes his hourly moan :
He wishes and can wish for this alone.

THE day of the match was voted a complete success even by those who had found on it causes of anxiety, which did not end with it. Oswald was thankful to find Miss Yorke's prediction, that he would not be able to stand for a week, proved false. He was restless in the house, and so little inclined latterly to be much with his brother, that he was only really at ease when, on some plea or other, he could carry off a detachment, or often the whole array, of nephews and nieces. Geraldine was afraid he was overdoing it for her little brother, but she had not the heart to resist his pleading eyes. Oswald answered all her doubts by the assurance that his time was soon ending ; and it was with the same argument that he resisted her purpose of bringing their visit to a close, and returning to her father ; and Colonel Dennis was easily enlisted on his side.

It was astonishing, and not over-pleasing to Hubert, to see how he spoke of his going as a matter of course, not as a subject for regret. The more down-hearted Hubert felt himself growing, as the days of his uncle's stay could now be counted on his fingers, the more light-hearted Oswald

seemed to him in contrast, as he went about the house singing and whistling, and talking with pleased anticipation of being back at his work again with his recovered health.

It provoked Hubert to see his father's evident satisfaction, and nervous anxiety lest any imprudence or accident might delay his brother's movements. Oswald saw it, too, and laughed at it, saying, good-humouredly, "Your father, I am sure, Hu., thinks I have an intention of carrying you off against your will ; but he may be quite sure I am as anxious to be out of the way before your *decision* is to be made as he can be to have me. You can write and tell me what it is when you have made it."

Hubert felt glad he could put a stop to the subject by the laughing rejoinder, "Uncle, you are breaking rules." It was one he could bear to have touched upon less than ever. His father's words on the day of the cricket match haunted him, as he had heard him deny for the first time, and publicly, the certainty of his future. From that time his own mind had accepted as a certainty that there was a doubt. The sentence, "A boy's decision will be made on wise grounds," rang in his ears, though he strove, as before with the fears of his own raising, to thrust it aside. It was but indifferently that he succeeded ; and the prospect of the coming time, when lessons, and the ordinary daily round, would be all he should have to help him, increased his shrinking from his uncle's loss.

"Come, Hu., it is absurd to be looking so lugubrious about what can't be helped," was Oswald's attempt at cheering. They were all riding towards the lime kilns to superintend an out of door feast for the orphan children. O'Hara had fresh companionship in the carriage,—Miss Sturt and the nursery party ; and Oswald was enjoying his ride, while remembering his brother's charge not to be thoughtless and fall into a trot. Osbert and May rode races out of sight and back again, Geraldine and Oswald going at a quiet pace, while Hubert went by their side lost in his own

troubled thoughts; they seemed to him just then growing in number and weight.

He had discovered that morning the mystery of the Moor Farm, and his uncle's purchase of it. His father before had turned him off when he made his proposed inquiries. Some question about a letter he was copying for him had taken him back to the study, which he had left to make way for the bailiff. As he opened the door he heard a voice raised in quick speech, louder and quicker than could come from either his father or Mr. Cox. His uncle was standing by the table, and he heard the words, "Sell the farm away from the place, if you like; and if so, I'll invest the money elsewhere, and he shall have the interest in a lump when he passes for Lieutenant. If I help him I'll do it as I choose." His uncle was plainly angry about something, and he made his escape more quickly than he had come. Oswald soon followed him, and sat down to help him about the letter, his nephew standing by and watching the sharply moving pen, whose quick motion seemed a let out for his indignation.

"A precious thing to accuse one of, certainly," he said. And a few quick words soon told how the farm had been bought to help his brother, after some heavy losses from his Jamaica properties, and that the rent of it had been appropriated by its new owner for the use of his favourite nephew. "He was on the point of telling poor Mr. Maynard he must go," Oswald went on; "but this made it straight for him, too, and saved you from being sent to some tutor in Canworth. What was making me speak faster than he liked just now was his discovering that I had made the agreement till you pass your examination for Lieutenant. Of course I never dreamed of any other possible ending to you."

"But what was papa displeased about, then?" Hubert asked.

"Why, now," Oswald said, resuming his indignant tone, "I am accused of having been aiming at forcing him, for

the sake of the help for you, to give in to my wishes about your profession. If he thinks so, I tell him he may buy the farm back ; but I'll help you in my own way. It is the taking for granted that your lot is fixed that is the terrible offence, I see."

Hubert's next question, when his uncle's quick tones were silent, was, "Then if I were to break my leg, or anything happen to stop my going, what would become of Mr. Maynard?"

"Why, he would be kept to coach you up for the Civil Service, or something, I suppose."

"And when I go to sea?"

"Then I fear he will have to find another home. Your father would not stand the large outlay, I know; and, indeed, any way, school is the right place for Osbert."

There was nothing said after that, for Geraldine came in, exclaiming, at their delay, "I am sorry to interrupt you if you are giving Hubert a scolding; but it will be cruelty to keep the children waiting." Her beaming look of happiness was contagious. Oswald's clouded face cleared, and they were soon off.

It was not surprising that Hubert should feel an addition of perplexing thought, as he jogged along by his uncle's side and meditated over what he had learned. So on that "decision, to be made on wise grounds," hung not only his own future, but, for some years, at least, that of his tutor. He tried to fancy the library without its constant inmate, the armchair by the fireside without the shrunken figure, that, latterly, had seemed to be more lost in its size; and he grew indignant with the idea he raised of other boys, stupid, perhaps, who did not understand his ways, tiring him with their dulness; or, worse still, rudeness, or neglect, or impudence meeting him now, when he was less able to put it down, than when, alas, in the old days, he himself had opposed his strict rule, with such weapons. There he was, on the road, creeping along in the shade;

and Hubert was off his pony in a moment, walking with him. His face brightened, as it always did, as he answered Hubert's talk, joining with him in it as he did with no one else ; and when the pony's quick trot had again carried him from him, Hubert, as he looked round, saw him standing still, looking that way, ready to return his smile and wave of the hand. When the boy reached his companions again, his resumed meditations had driven the last remnant of the smile away.

It was all very well for uncle to laugh at the strongly-shown shrinking, on his father's part, from the slightest thing which should mark that terrible *decision* as already made : he could not. He could but see how entirely any decision his father might once have made for him was reversed, and what hopes he held that the "childish fancy," as he had called it, might be changed for the only decision which he would call wise. Ah, that fancy ! Call it what his father might, he knew that it was to him now, and had been through all his years, what he might truly call it, the light of his life ; for never had there come to him one trouble, or dark day, that it had not been strong enough to brighten : on everything for him that one fixed hope had shed its light. It had never moved from before him,—from the nursery days, when it was only seen in distant hazy brightness, till now so close he might soon put out his hand and grasp it. What need to go over again what made its beauty ? He knew it all already. "And it is just that I love the very thought of it. I want it, I want it ! I cannot lose it now, and I will not live divided from uncle. But oh, papa !"

A merry peal of laughter from Geraldine startled the birds from the trees they were passing under ; but not a muscle moved in Hubert's face, nor did he raise his eyes from the toe of his boot, where all his thoughts seemed engrossed in getting the end of his riding whip in between it and the stirrup iron. A mile away he might have been for all he had heard passing at his side.

"Hu., do you know what I should like to do?"

Oswald had looked down to speak to him some minutes before ; but had watched him instead. He roused his attention now by a stroke across the shoulders with his cane.

"No. What?"

"Why, just take you by the shoulders, and shake these perpetual brown studies, or their cause, out of you. What is the matter with you? One would think, to look at you, you were ten years older than I am, at least."

"Next Friday is not such a very pleasant prospect but what one may look grave," Hubert answered, giving the first reason he could catch at ; and then Oswald gave him his advice about the uselessness of looking lugubrious.

"It wasn't true to say that was what I was thinking of," the boy said, hastily. And putting his pony to a trot, joined the two racers.

"I would give ten pounds this minute to know what it is. He has something on his mind, as sure as I am here."

Geraldine suggested he was, most probably, fretting at the thought of leaving his father and home so soon.

"No," said Oswald : "that wouldn't make him like this. I know Hubert better than that. I shall question Mr. Maynard, and see if he knows anything. They seem to have become great friends. I can't but fear the poor boy has done something he is sorry for. I hear him at night, when I am in my room sometimes, tossing about, and talking in his sleep, as if he were uneasy ; and it is not natural : he is quite well, and usually a sound sleeper. He never answers my questions frankly, when I ask him if there is anything wrong : always turns them off, and blushes up, as if there were something behind he was ashamed of. I don't like it. He was always remarkably open, and never hid a thought from me, much less a trouble."

"I thought it was merely grieving at your going," said Geraldine. "He was terribly miserable when you went last time."

"No, no: that is not it. You heard what he said just now. I saw there was something wrong the first evening I was home. His light-heartedness has a weight on it. It troubles me more than I can tell you."

Geraldine saw it did; but could only suggest the hope that Hubert would be himself again, when he was once fairly settled in his new life. Oswald shook his head.

"Perhaps so. I hope I am not wronging the boy thinking it must be some wrong-doing weighing on him. If it is, it is something bad to have changed him so. If it weren't for his looking ashamed of himself, I would believe anything sooner. But I will certainly ask Maynard. Now, shall we have a canter, or we shall be late?"

There was no opportunity for a relapse into brown studies for the rest of their happy day. As they rode home in the twilight, Hubert resisted any inclination to resume his troubled ponderings, vexed that his uncle had noticed him in the earlier part of the day, and Oswald heard with content his voice as busy as his brother's and sister's, as they passed him and Geraldine to enjoy a quick pace homewards. "He is quite cheerful again, you see," she said.

"Oh, of course: no boy can brood for ever, whatever he has on his mind."

"But, indeed, I am sure you must be mistaken in thinking he has done anything he is ashamed of," Geraldine said, little willing to agree to any imputation on O'Hara's favourite. "I have been thinking of all I know of him, and I don't believe anyone so kind, and self-denying, and truthful, and good altogether, as I know he is, could go on concealing anything wrong. I wish you could have heard him at the cricket match, holding out against that boy Rowland and Osbert about betting on the number of runs you would make."

"Ah," said Oswald, "Mr. Maynard told me they were at it."

"Yes: he and I were sitting talking in the tent after

luncheon, to be out of the sun, and we heard the boys outside, speaking very loud, and Hubert arguing in his laying-down-the-law way against this betting, which he said was against the club rules. He ended with, "I tell you I have been taught to believe that when I have agreed to obey a rule in order to have the right to something I like, I should be a sneak if I kept what I wanted and broke the rules that gave me a right to it."

"Bravo, Hu.!" cried Oswald. "What did they say to that?"

"Oh, there was a great uproar at the word sneak, and a scuffle; but I was watching Mr. Maynard: he was listening so intently, and muttered to himself, 'True, true: just like him.' The next thing I heard of Hubert was his voice further off, as if he were leaving them, saying, 'It is not money I care about, and you know it; but the right to look our captain in the face. If anyone of you makes a bet on my uncle, you'll have no right to come into the cricket field next week. If you do, you will come as a hypocrite: you can't be a member and break the rules too.'"

"Plain language boys exchange," said Oswald. "Did they let him go in peace?"

"Oh, dear no: such a battle followed! I think Osbert stood by him, though. There seemed to be some great joke about some tatooing he had done, sailor fashion, on his arm. They said he should let them see it, and tell them what it meant, or else take the bet. Poor Hubert did get very angry, I am afraid, then. I wanted to give him a call to let them know that we were there, but Mr. Maynard said I mustn't: it was his school life, and he must fight his own battles. However, at last, when the scuffle sounded as if he were being thrown down, he said they would be making him unfit to play any more, and he went out to some distance and gave a call, and they all ran off. Hubert came into the tent a few minutes after to get some water. He is such a strange sort of boy; he didn't see I was there:

he was near the entrance. He drew down his sleeve to fasten it, and stood looking at it without moving some time, and then said to himself, as if he were sorry about something, "Easy to call others hypocrites: a precious way mine of obeying rules." And then something about its being a mercy that his right to what he wanted didn't depend on that. Then he said, louder, "But I'll not lose the right to look my Captain in the face." He drank his glass of water, buttoned his sleeve, and stood a moment with his hands folded before him and his eyes shut. I only hoped he wouldn't see me, and be put out; but he turned to the opening as if he were half reluctant to go, then said, suddenly, "At least one can look and speak as if one felt friendly," and he rushed off. I came out of my corner then, and on my way back to Harry I came again upon Mr. Maynard leaning against a tree. He was watching a group of boys and young men talking together, and said to me, nodding towards them, 'Look there, Miss Dennis. I call that acting up to principle: a positive rule, harder than the negative club rule, is being obeyed there.' I did look, and there was Hubert kneeling by the Rowland's boy, helping him to fasten something about a pad, and looking up at him talking and laughing as good humouredly as if there had been no quarrel. 'I call that a victory, indeed,' Mr. Maynard said; and then asked himself, in his queer, absent way, 'Where is the secret of his power, so young and so proud tempered?' I thought I could have told him," Geraldine added, as she bent forward to pat her horse's neck; "but I was not going to. Now can you believe that a boy who thinks and acts like that can have done wrong, and be hiding it?" she asked, after some minutes, during which Oswald had remained silent.

"He has found a champion in you, anyway," he said, looking round with a smile. "No, I cannot, when I think of him as I know him to be,—as you describe him,—high principled, and high principled too on the only reliable

foundation ; feeling bound to obey his Saviour's commands in all things."

"Did he mean that, by not losing his right to look into his Captain's face? I thought he was speaking of you."

"Oh, no : I am not their captain now. It was putting into his own style of words, St. John's, when he tells us as a reason for keeping Christ's commands, 'that when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.' I do believe Hubert lives in the constant thought of being prepared for seeing Him, as one who has faithfully served."

"Then you won't think anything bad of him, will you?" Geraldine asked, earnestly. "I feel sure with him, even if anything might look suspicious, it would turn out in the end to have had some extra good reason for it."

"May I never be brought before a less prejudiced judge," he said, smiling. "Believe me, I am not inclined to think any evil of him : it is only that I cannot understand any want of openness about him ; and what can call for looks of shame but sense of shame? I am glad you have told me this of him."

Oswald's questionings of the tutor gave him no solution of his puzzle, and Mr. Maynard's suggestions were not more welcome to Oswald than the idea of some hidden fault was to Mr. Maynard. "You do him injustice," was the decided answer. "Hubert's past will never make him dread to turn his head. It is easy surely to find a cause for any fits of depression in the prospect he has before him ; and his embarrassment with you is no wonder, knowing, as he must, how you would feel towards his thoughts."

"He is dying to go. What spirited boy of thirteen would feel depression at the near approach of the very thing he has been hoping for for years? I know I could not rest when my time drew near."

The tutor smiled, saying, "I think, with equal love to the

chosen profession, your home circumstances, you must own, are not to be compared."

Agreeing that there the cases differed, Oswald's next question was, "Then you think it is the leaving home that is grieving him?"

"I believe that the thought of what is before him is the cause," Mr. Maynard said. And Oswald, not noticing the evasion of the answer, said, doubtfully, "I suppose you know. But he has never breathed a word like regret to me: has he to you?"

"I know, without needing him to tell me, that he is favourite son,—the chief one now in the house in his father's eyes. Everything done that possibly can be to make his life enjoyable and his home luxuriously enticing,—in truth, what single thing is there to elbow him out into the world?"

Oswald looked aghast. "Except love of change and adventure; desire for the one special profession, the hope of years; and—what I know is no small inducement,—following me."

"Yes: those are all things to beckon him out: I was speaking of what would hold him in."

Oswald sat silent, not at all convinced. "And you think really such considerations are weighing with a spirited lad like Hu? I don't believe it: his eyes glisten at the very thought of the sea."

"Truly," said Mr. Maynard.

"Then what do you mean?" asked Oswald, vexed at his reticence.

"Merely what I said: that it is those considerations I mentioned, and others no doubt, which are causing his only too visible depression. I should take no notice of it if I were you."

"Unfortunately I must not if that is the cause, nor may he speak of it to me: my brother has shut my mouth on the subject, dreading persuasion. A great piece of nonsense."

"I think not, if the question be still an open one," said the tutor, rising to go.

"But it is not an open one,—at least in anyone's eyes but his own," Oswald said, impatiently.

"Why, Mr. Raymond, you were by when he answered Miss Yorke at the close of the match the other day."

"And what has that to do with it? He may say the boy has to decide: as well say that Maxwell has to decide whether he is going into the army. Stay a minute, Mr. Maynard," as the tutor moved off. "Please just tell me plainly: have you any reason for believing Hubert changed in his purpose?"

"If you mean has he changed his desire for a life at sea,—none."

"Then what is it that is damping him? That was always his first hope."

"That may remain as strong, and yet another become paramount."

"I don't believe it," said Oswald, indignantly. "I know Hu. a little too well for that: he is no weather-cock."

"Nay, certainly not. But the emblem of stedfastness, your compass, Mr. Raymond, may waver long before it settles to its point; but once found it will never leave it: nor will he his." He walked away as he spoke, and his companion remained to ponder with no satisfaction over their short conversation, and what he called the unfounded fancies of the tutor, which he was prevented from even having the pleasure of combating.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE EMPTY ROOM.

"It is a weary task, to school the heart
Ere years or griefs have tamed its fiery throbbings,
Into that still and passive fortitude
Which is but learned from suffering."

"UNCLE, do you know you have broken your promise to me?" Hubert asked on the last evening of Oswald's stay at home. A shower had driven them all in from the garden, and he was hastening to finish copying a sketch of his uncle's before he must lose it.

Oswald looked round from the window, where he was leaning within the curtain talking to Geraldine. "How: what?" he asked. "That is a grave charge."

"Don't you recollect saying you would give me two prints for my room? and now I shall only have this little copy to adorn it with."

"Hu., I am sorry. Why didn't you remind me?" said his uncle.

"You were always so busy: there never seemed any time; and Harry couldn't have come so far, and so Gerry wouldn't; and then you wouldn't have cared to."

"Your uncle been busy, did you say, Hu?" asked his father, as Oswald came out from the window, and began making corrections of his nephew's drawing. "He has seemed to me to play the man of leisure with the greatest

ease. But, I say, Oswald, if you want to give Hu. the prints still, it can be managed. I was meaning to drive into town soon with Mr. Maynard, to decide about some books Benson has had down for me. Let us go to-morrow: you can choose Hu's present, and go on by the afternoon train. You mentioned no time to your friends for arriving: did you?"

Oswald said he had not. "And I shall be glad, Hu., not to leave your bare walls to proclaim me a promise-breaker; though, as to that, I could have left the wherewithal, or sent you a couple from London."

"Then I shouldn't have cared about them," said Hubert. "I like pictures in one's room to remind one of something."

"And what will the one you are finishing remind you of, you sentimental boy?" asked Geraldine, laughing.

"Why, it is uncle's ship," said Hubert, as if that were answer sufficient.

Oswald went on, adding improving touches, and planning their expedition, well pleased with his brother's suggestion. And the morrow found their usual party, with Mr. Maynard in addition, at the door of Benson, the stationer and print dealer.

Geraldine had found it hard to leave her little sobbing brother, whose fortitude, after all his strong resolves, had broken down altogether, as he clung round Oswald's neck as if he could not let him go. It was no good trying to comfort; and Mr. Raymond was right in saying that a morning with the children was more likely to distract his thoughts than all his sister's petting. "And indeed you would take a great deal of pleasure from all of us by staying behind," was an argument she was prevailed on at last to believe: but it was hard to forget the poor little white face she had left. It was not much easier to Oswald, who felt guilty as the cause of his grief, and turned over half the stationer's books and wares in search of something new to send back to him.

Hubert, meanwhile, studied the inviting array of prints at

his leisure, tempted, first by one and then another, and distracted by advice from everyone, till Mr. Raymond carried off the tutor to some private premises to transact their business; and the other advisers finding all their counsel useless, went to bestow it upon Oswald.

It was a quarter of an hour later that Mr. Maynard returned, and seated himself near to where Hubert was standing before three selected pictures studying them. The battle scenes and sea fights, which had been at once brought forward by the attentive salesman as most likely to suit his customer, with dogs and horses and copies from Landseer, had been put aside, and Mr. Maynard was surprised to see the subjects of those between which the balance seemed to lie. Of one he could understand the choice. The disciples bent toiling in rowing in their fishing boat, and beyond them the figure of the Lord, with a faint halo round Him, was coming towards them out of the dusk of the storm-darkened evening. Printed below in red and gold, on the Oxford frame, were the words, "He ruleth the raging of the sea." A second of the same size leant near it. A Roman soldier stood before a small altar, part of the figure of a Jupiter visible above it. A priest bent forward pressing the incense upon him, which he refused with his hand, looking round to where a woman was hurrying forward from the crowd, her hands clasped and her look despairing. The soldiers had passed on in front, leaving an open space, through which, in the sunny distance, the amphitheatre, already filling with spectators of the feast-day games, was visible, suggesting the future consequences of the soldier's just spoken avowal. Behind him his fellow-soldiers were pressing forward, some laughing, some persuading, one warning, with eye and hand directed to the distance. The Christian's look was on the woman, suffering and determination meeting in his face. The words upon the frame were, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." The third picture was an upright, the gilded

corners of the mount forming an arch at the top. Stamped upon them, Mr. Maynard read, "He went down with them, and was subject unto them." The entrance to the home at Nazareth was the scene,—Mary still seated upon the weary-looking ass, Joseph advancing to lift her to the ground, and the child, Jesus, standing a little apart, His eyes fixed upon the sky above the distant hills, the look upon His face seeming to tell of the thought within,—memory fixed on the home from which for twelve years He had been absent, and for which this cottage was the exchange.

"You find the last decision difficult," the tutor said, after he had sat some time studying the prints, and the face opposite them.

Hubert started: his mind had not been with the pictures, but with their subjects. "Yes: I want them all, and don't know which to give up."

"You have chosen all serious subjects. Shouldn't you like this one of the hunted deer?"

"Please, Mr. Maynard, if they speak against them, advise for them. I want them," Hubert said, earnestly, as his uncle came up to them, asking if he had made his selection, as they were already due at the hotel for luncheon.

"Why: are these your choice?"

Hubert saw they would not have been his. "Not if you don't like them, uncle. Choose some for me."

"No: they are for you to look at, not me. I do like them; but I wonder you don't like a variety. This fight between a lion and buffalo: that is a spirited thing, and very well drawn."

"Yes: do have that!" cried Osbert, as the rest gathered round.

"Or this one," said May, "of Titania's court. The fairies are such pretty little things!"

"I don't want lions or fairies in my bed-room," said Hubert. "Which of these three do you like best, uncle?"

"Now, Hubert," said Geraldine, "you said you liked

pictures that reminded you of something. What can that Roman soldier remind you of?"

The boy coloured, and hesitated; and Oswald said, "It may well remind of the power that can overcome: mayn't it?"

"Why, uncle," cried Osbert, "I am sure this old lion may remind of that just as much: he is doing for the buffalo!"

There was a general laugh; while Oswald said, "Aye, 'Bert. But what is the use of being kept in mind of a sort of strength we can never hope for?"

"Well, of course not; but no more can Hu. ever hope for a chance of standing out against a heathen priest, or being a martyr."

"We may all need the power by which that soldier keeps stedfast, though not for martyrdom."

"If a true martyr is a sufferer for conscience sake," said the tutor, turning round upon them, "there are many as true martyrdoms borne as ever that soldier's will be; though no blood be shed, and the sacrifice be unseen by wondering crowds."

"I should think so," said Oswald: "suffering willingly endured by those who would love none more than their Lord." As he spoke, he noticed that Hubert moved restlessly to the further picture, looking as if disliking the discussion, so nearly personal, and fearing another question as to his own feelings on the subject of his choice. "Come, old man, you must decide," he said. And as another shower of suggestions fell upon him, he turned to his brother, who had joined them, and begged him to conduct the rest of their party to the hotel, and that they would follow in a minute. They went, only Mr. Maynard lingering to see the result. "Now then, if you want advice, I should say take the two long ones. Look here! You will like this as a centre between them. I had sent it to Benson to frame, and he has just brought it to me."

Hubert turned, and there, resting on a stand of books, O'Hara's face looked out at him from an oval frame. It

was such a likeness of him as he had not yet seen, though there were plenty about the Grange. It was in coloured crayons, and was a likeness of expression as well as of feature. Hubert had no thanks to express warm enough. The long prints were decided on at once; and the tutor, after a word aside to the shopman, left them to enjoy their last walk together.

Oswald had meant to have used any such opportunity for the giving of a little uncle-like advice about the way his nephew was looking at his approaching leaving home, fearing, perhaps, that Mr. Maynard's ideas, as he had understood them, might be right; but his head now was full of other things, and he walked down the street, talking in snatches, and smiling every now and then at some thought of his own, forgetful of every thing around him.

Hubert would not be less philosophical than he was. "If uncle is not sorry to go away from me, he shall not see me sorry for him." But when they were near the hotel, his curiosity overcame his pride, and he looked up, saying, "Uncle, I should like to know what is making you look so awfully happy. You look as if you were just come home, instead of just going away."

"Now, Hu., mayn't I look as happy going away with two whole feet as coming home with one half crushed?"

"It has nothing to do with your foot, uncle. What is it?"

Oswald looked at him a moment; then said, "We'll make a bargain, Hu.: I'll tell you the reason of my happiness when you tell me the reason of your brown studies."

The flush it vexed him to see rose suddenly to the boy's hair, and passed away again, leaving him looking as if he hardly knew where he was walking. He was startled; for he had thought himself safe from questions. He had fought against his gloomy thoughts since the day of the ride to the kilns, and had begun to hope his uncle had forgotten the outward signs of them. He made no reply, and walked on, feeling, for the first time in his life, that to be parted from

the one he loved best in the world would be a relief; no other eyes in the house would watch him like that pair of grey ones he felt on him now.

They reached the steps of the hotel, and Hubert's heart beat fast as Oswald touched his shoulder to detain him, saying, "Hubert, my boy, tell me now, before I go, are you changing your mind about wishing to go to sea? Be frank with me, tell me the truth: I can bear that, but not to think you are deceiving me. It is your own affair. Don't be afraid to tell me if you are wishing to change." There was no answer for a minute; and it was with some peremptoriness of tone, as he saw the expression of distress in his nephew's face, that he repeated, "Are you?" The tone made Hubert rally his spirits.

"What makes you ask such a thing?" he asked, looking up at him.

"Never mind what makes me ask: answer my question. Are you changing?"

"You really speak, uncle, as if I had given up wishing to go. Of course I haven't. Aren't you satisfied?" he asked, meeting the look fixed on him with a smile. "What could have made you get such a fancy?" Then fearful of any more questionings, he added, quickly, "I shall never change my wish, if I live to a hundred."

"I am relieved to hear you say so," Oswald said. "Your fits of gloominess lately made me fear that you were repenting your choice, or feeling that the wrench from home was more than you could bear. The pain of that will soon be over."

"Oh, yes," said Hubert, so simply, that his uncle altered his opinion again, and went back to his former idea, and that Mr. Maynard's fancies were unfounded. Osbert ran out to call them then, and nothing more was said.

There was a merry luncheon, and then a sauntering on the station platform, where Mr. Raymond's fears brought them twenty minutes too soon. As the train at last came

up, and the brothers were exchanging a few last words apart, Hubert joining them, wondered what the final sentences he heard might mean, as Mr. Raymond shook Oswald's hand, saying, "You will keep a brave heart, I know, hard though it is: and two years are not like Jacob's seven." "It will seem to me but a few days," was the smiling answer, as the bell rang, and other hands claimed his. He wondered, too, and with some little hurt feeling, that the last look and smile, hitherto always his, went with a charge to Geraldine to give his best love to Harry, with his parcel, and to tell him to address to him at the "Great Western" hotel in town, if he wrote within two days. The train started, and Hubert turned away with the tears in his eyes.

Sauntering up to his window, on his return home, feeling very disconsolate, as he seemed to hear the silence in the next room instead of the brisk bustle of his uncle's movements, his eye was caught by three letters lying on the table. One was a post one; the others unmarked, and an envelope with a blue oar, Oswald's form of cypher, upon it, was seized on first. The touch of wounded feeling and pain, as though he had been forgotten, disappeared as he read the kind words, saying to himself as he did so, "Dear kind uncle, who but he would have thought of taking the trouble." It was only a few lines of farewell, "because," as he wrote, "you and I have always gone off together before, and to-day we shall be a number, so this note shall say more of a good-bye than one can say on a railway station, and I hope cure some of the forlornness you will feel in going back to our half-emptied quarters." The subject of O'Hara's portrait filled some lines; then some charges with regard to little Ben. Watts, who was to be despatched to Portsmouth, and the note ended with the words, "I can never bear the idea of forcing myself into anyone's confidence, or to seem to claim it even from you; but I must say now, when you need not answer me if you don't like, if I can help you in whatever is troubling you, write to me, and you know there is nothing

I would not do for you. If I can be of no use, talk to Mr. Prescott; or if it is anything you ought to confess, be frank with your father; but don't let it go on. There can be no cause why a boy of your age, and with all you have round you, should be as unhappy as I know you are, for you have not succeeded better in hiding from me now that you are suffering, than you did when you were a little child, and when you ran your new knife into your hand. You know you were better off when you had pocketed your pride, and come to me to be doctored." A few warm affectionate words followed, which Hubert read with swimming eyes, and the signature, "Your ever affectionate uncle, and soon to be brother-mariner, O. A. Raymond."

Hubert had nearly forgotten his other letters, as he stood staring at the words: those of them which seemed to comfort him most just at first were, "Now, when you need not answer me if you don't like." "Oh, uncle, uncle: if I could only have talked to you! but if"—He stopped and took the other envelopes: one directed by his tutor, the other by some strange hand, and bearing the post-mark of some town unknown to him. Curiosity balanced between the two, deciding at last for the one which excited it most. Two enclosures fell out as he tore it, one directed for Geraldine, the other for O'Hara, a half sheet remaining for himself, asking him to deliver the enclosures, and ending with the words, "Believe me, your affte. friend, though I think you would hardly own me now as such, Dermot Dennis." "What can he be doing?" Hubert wondered to himself. Then, with a thought of the joy the two enclosed letters would bring, he hastened to open his tutor's note, his face lighting all over with pleasure as he read it, and the words, "Well, that is kind," his earnest comment. It contained only a few lines:—

"DEAR HUBERT,—Will you give me pleasure by accepting from me the third print you had chosen. I am glad you left that one for me, to whom your learning, from the

example there portrayed, has brought so many hours of rest, and lightened all the hours of work. May you have strength to hold on to the end, and to reach at last that perfectness of likeness you aim at. Believe me always, your sincere friend,

JOHN MAYNARD."

Hubert's eyes were glistening with happy unshed tears as he turned to unfasten his big parcel, which he had felt careless about opening on first coming in. There was something in his tutor's rarely shown feeling towards him most precious to him. He lifted his unexpected present on to the table, and looked at it some minutes; then placed it back in safety on a chair, saying to himself, "If one might only choose the one to whom to be subject. But, after all, that is only feeling like Dermot: not like Him. One must find out which is the one God has chosen,—a captain,—uncle, perhaps; or,—yes, it would just be that,—papa and Mr. Maynard. Oh, why can't I be like other boys, sent off to sea, and no fuss about it! Could I ever learn to feel like Harry,—happy without the only thing I wish for!"

In the ever strengthening desire for submission, he was unconsciously gaining the first preparation towards it, as he knelt day by day with the prayer on his lips, "Teach me what I ought to do, and help me to wish to do it." To onlookers, like his uncle and his tutor, his path was clear enough, though each saw the sign-post of duty point an opposite course; but to himself all was confused, his eyes unable even to look at the darker way clearly, dazzled as they were by the brightness which had been before them so long.

Dermot's letters told nothing of his way of life, nor did they give the faintest hint where he might be traced, but they told the fact that he was alive and well, and for that many thankful tears were shed over them by the readers, as the yearning love with which the words had been written was apparent in every line. Only May and Mr. Raymond were taken into confidence, Hubert going to his father to

get his advice as to what Geraldine should do about telling Colonel Dennis.

He was lying on his study sofa, very tired after his unusual exertions, when Hubert went in. Hardly giving attention to answer the question the boy asked, when his story was finished, he said hastily, "What was your uncle writing to you about?"

"Why, papa, how did you know he had written?"

"I saw his letter on your table when I took in Dermot's as I was going to my room. What could he need to say? He could have said all he wanted before he started."

Hubert knew by his father's manner what he was thinking the subject of the letter was. It vexed him, and his voice showed it as he answered, "It was about different things, partly about the train Ben. Watts is to go by."

"He could have told you that. I suppose," he added, "the truth is he has taken the first opportunity to go counter to the spirit without breaking the letter of my command."

Hubert reddened with anger. "How can you think uncle can be so mean, papa? If he had meant to disobey you he would have told you so first. There are plenty of things about which he and I may write, besides one thing about which I don't see he has anything to say."

"Don't speak in that tone, Hubert. Anyway, understand that my command to you, given when he first came home, remains the same with regard to your correspondence. The subject of your remaining at home or going to sea is not to be discussed: indeed, to be left entirely alone."

"Papa, I do think that is being very hard on me: please don't say that. Writing to him about it really can make no difference in my feeling."

"And really, my son, I think I am the best judge in the matter. Now I can't have any dispute about it: my head is troublesome this evening: only remember it is my order. What was it you were asking about Dermot's letter? Ah, I

remember. I should think the better plan would be for O'Hara to tell his father after they go home : he is very likely, I think, now to be thankful for tidings."

"Very well ; I'll tell them," Hubert said ; and left the room, walking sadly upstairs, with Oswald's letter pressed tight between his two hands.

The weeks passed on, and everything had gone back into the old ways outwardly, while Oswald's stay among them and the wonderfully happy holidays were talked of as a golden age, too delightful ever to return. Upon Hubert a settled gravity had come down. Even the servants noticed the boy's change of look, and the opinion downstairs was that he was "fretting after his uncle, poor young gentleman ;" or that he was "moping to think of leaving master ;" while nurse settled the point by being certain that he had caught "something : it was not natural he should go on all these years and not have anything like the other children." Hubert laughed in her face when she charged him with feeling ill, and turned away thankful that if he could not help letting face and manner tell tales of the now never absent care, at least no eyes remained so sharpened by love as to have power to penetrate beyond. If Mr. Raymond noticed his son's looks, he said nothing about it ; only his tenderness of manner redoubled, and such continual care and thought were shown for him, that Hubert often thought he would willingly dispense with the proofs of a love the nature of which it pained him to realize.

The harvest fields had been shorn of their gold, and the trees here and there among the woods were already decking themselves out with theirs ; the days were shortening, and cooler nights and rising mists told that autumn was not far away, and Hubert knew that the time of trial was near. That he was still quite unfit to meet it he also knew as, wretched with the constant tossings of uncertainty, he knelt in the seat of his window in the darkness, watching the stars night after night, with his head pressed against the

wood-work. Over and over again the same weary questions were asked and answered, and round and round the same arguments, sometimes ending in one conclusion sometimes in another, chased each other through his brain. How he longed for some voice to speak the words, "This is the way;" or even to bring him some words of counsel. The blue black sky, with its myriads of glittering stars, spoke to him perhaps better than any counsellor with voice that could be heard, and from the truth they repeated his still childish heart lost something, for a time at least, of its weakness, and gained strength to face the resolve which he sometimes felt bitterly must be made,—to cast away with his own hand his own treasure of joy and hope. They reminded of a world beyond the one he knew, where a richer joy was stored than that towards which his eyes had looked out during his childhood's years, and they told of a hope which reached beyond them, secure when time and sea should be no more. Yet while he thought he gained willingness to bear the loss he tried to face, if that were duty, he knew that a secret hope lurked still in the bottom of his heart that something would yet turn up to save him, and often and often he found his dreamy thinkings had wandered back into the old happy channels, and he was by his uncle's side upon deck, or taking his way with him among scenes he had described to him. Indeed as yet hope had never really gone from him for a moment, clouded though it had been by constantly thickening fears, and when his impatience longed for the time to come to have it decided and have it over, it was but a longing to get rid of the fears: he could not take in what it would be to be rid of the hope.

His tutor guessed at his late hours by the sight of his heavy eyes in the morning, and the long yawning fits which provoked Osbert in the midst of their reading; and he took to knocking at his door on his way to his own room at night. His remonstrance if he found him up, or regret that he was still awake if he found him in bed, was always received with

the same answer, "It is no good, Mr. Maynard: I can't go to sleep." And the tutor's few kind words came to be looked for; and Hubert wondered that he should allow for a week the effect of his heavy morning sleep without comment. The cross was marked against his name for form's sake, but he heard no more of it.

For several days Mr. Raymond had been suffering with his head. He came down stairs, but passed the day in his study, and it was there one Sunday evening that Hubert was summoned. He wondered what made his heart beat so fast. The words, "Master wants to speak to you," he heard very often; but now, when his hand was on the handle of the door, he stood a few minutes irresolute before he could determine to open it. Only a shaded lamp was on the table, and his father lay on the sofa. As he went in he half-rose, as if to meet him, and then sank back again.

"Yes, Papa. What is it?"

"Come and sit down: I want to talk to you."

And Hubert knew the time he dreaded was come. He grew cold, and then hot, and went and sat down by his father's side without speaking, only turning to study the face by him, when there was silence instead of the words he expected. Very thin and white it was, and a look of pain about the mouth made Hubert bend for a kiss, as he asked, "What did you want to talk about? Hadn't you better wait till you are better?"

"I shall not be better yet awhile; and the sooner I say what I have to say, the better for us both." There was a pause; then drawing himself up into a sitting posture, he said, speaking low, and as if he had arranged beforehand what to say, "In most cases, when a boy's career in life has to be chosen, it is sufficient for a father to fix upon what he thinks wise and suitable, and then if no well-grounded objection be offered, so decide; but in your case it is different, and it is on that subject I wish to speak to you now. Owing to various causes, you have grown up with a

particular desire, not indeed fostered by me, but still not opposed, and for that reason I do not intend or wish to oppose it now; and instead of putting before you some idea of a profession for you of my own selection, which, at your age, there is no need for, I have only to remind you that the time has come for you to decide for yourself whether you will hold to your old child's fancy, and choose the navy as your profession, or whether you will abandon it, continue your education at home, and choose, at a later age, some other calling." He paused a moment, and sat thinking with his eyes shut, as if trying to recall what he had meant to say, checking Hubert with a sign when he would have spoken. "Hear what I have to say to you. There is still more than a month before us before it is necessary that I should know your choice, and that time I give you to make your decision."

"Oh, indeed, papa, I would rather much you decided for me," Hubert said, vehemently. "I don't want to go and do what you don't wish: you know I don't."

"I know you don't, my boy," Mr. Raymond answered; "and for that reason I express not the faintest wish in the matter. I have nothing to do with it. You are to decide entirely for yourself, for your own happiness, which is my highest desire. Remember, I would no more dream of keeping you from the sea for my pleasure, if you still feel you should be unhappy were you not to go, than I would have dreamed of keeping Maude from her husband to please myself."

Hubert had always known, from the day when his father had so determined in that matter, that he should hear of it again, and in this way; but it did not make it any pleasanter now, recalling, as he did, in spite of himself, the words, and all that had passed at that time.

Mr. Raymond's voice grew firmer, as he went on speaking. "Such a decision, however, is not one to be made lightly, or in a hurry, for it is for life. I can allow no changing when the choice is once made, so be sure of the grounds

on which you form it, and do not deceive yourself,—a thing only too easy in your case to do. You do not see how? Why, in taking your uncle's wish for you as your own wish; or in thinking a desire to be like him is a real desire for his profession; or a feeling of pride may urge you to go on saying what you have always said, and make you shrink to own your mind changed; or a mere love of change may be strong, and that may be mistaken for a choice having a basis. But, Hubert, dear son, be certain such reasons will not wear, and then will come bitter regrets. In fact there are many ways in which you may deceive yourself; but there is also a danger that you may overlook what you ought to consider. Try and recall all honestly to your mind,—not the reasons why you would like to go, with those you are familiar, and they are easily run through,—but those which would make it greater happiness to stay at home, and which perhaps you have never enumerated. You must try and fairly face what you lose and give up for ever by leaving home; for though you may return at long intervals, it will never be the same home to you. The place you now fill in it will have closed behind you."

"And what if it did!" was Hubert's thought, as he sat looking straight before him, a hand grasping each knee.

Much more Mr. Raymond said, passing over his ears as so many words; it seemed to him so utterly apart from the subject what loss he might sustain, while gaining all he wanted. And when at last the voice ceased, he retained but the one impression, "One month, and it must be fixed for ever;" while Mr. Raymond deceived himself that he had put the case strongly before him, and studied the boy's face, wondering what line his thoughts were taking. They led him, after a few silent minutes, to the sudden question, startling his father: "If I were not to go, should you send Osbert?"

Doubtful of the effect of his answer, it was given evasively. "Likely enough: the strict discipline would do him good,—

indeed, would be the best thing for him. But any consideration of that kind can be left till you know your own mind."

Hubert's whole face changed, and he answered, hotly, "I know it now, papa, as well as I ever shall. Let me fix now, and have done with it. I cannot go on thinking a month about one thing: it would drive me mad."

"Hush, Hubert!" said his father, seizing his arm. "I forbid you to say one word of what you think you wish now. You cannot decide on a question for life in a moment."

"But it is not in a moment: it is all my"—

"Nay, be quiet: I will not hear you now. Come to me on this day in four weeks time, with a deliberately made choice, and you may speak as you will: till then, not one word will I hear on the subject." Hubert stood up, and walked to the door. "Are you going, Hu., without wishing good-night?" his father asked; and he turned again, smothering down the anger which had filled his heart, and repeated the customary words, giving his cheek for his father's kiss, while resenting the tenderness of the "God bless you, my dear, and' help you to come to a right decision."

He was thankful to be on the other side of the door, and tossing his arms above his head, as if throwing off a weight, he laughed aloud, saying, "No, indeed: 'Bert shall never stand in my place. Fancy uncle's face. That was what he meant, was it, saying he was probably going to sea. No, thank you, papa: if you don't want me to stay at home for your pleasure, I'll do it for no one else's, you may be sure. This hateful month! Never mind: I have been idiotic enough to have been letting all this bother me to this degree. If I am to please myself I will. Whether he will hear or not, I may fix for myself; and from now my mind is made up. Go to sea I will, through thick and thin. The idea of Osbert in *my* uniform!" He rushed upstairs to bed, and though a passing uneasiness returned as the light caught one of the pictures on his wall; and again, when he

knelled to pray, a thought crossing his mind that somehow he must be deceiving himself, and forgetting something he had before felt strongly, the uneasy feeling soon left him. For the first time for many days he fell into sound, dreamless sleep, not many minutes after his head had touched the pillow. With brisk step, eager manner, and quick speech, for the next few days he went about, the same boy as of old ; and while May with gladness welcomed his old self returned, his tutor marvelled what this new change in the life he watched with such interest might argue, and his father's anxiety, but ill concealed, increased day by day, as Hubert avoided being with him as much as possible, and his manner was stiff, excited, and unnatural. Osbert, quite certain that good temper in his brother just then could only mean one thing, sulked in continual ill temper ; and nurse gave thanks downstairs that Master Hubert was quite himself again, indeed more noisy than ever, and that the "something" she dreaded had not been caught, for certain, this time.

Whether he were himself truly he stopped to wonder now and then, at no time more than when he sat dashing off a random answer to his uncle's first received ship letter. It had ended with a sentence or two which had been read with such intense gratification, that May, from behind her coffee-pot, had asked whether uncle had hurt his foot again ; and Mr. Raymond's suspicions were roused, as they well might be, could he have looked over his son's shoulder. "I shall fancy you, by the time you receive this," Oswald wrote, "in all the unhappiness of your last few weeks at home ; but don't let the sight of your poor father's sorrow overthrow your courage. It is always horrible to be the cause, however innocent, of giving pain, as I felt with little Harry's arms round my neck ; but it is a man's fate to be so to the end of time. Look steadily at the fact that a career you will rejoice in, and which you are entirely fitted for, is open before you now ; but which if cowardly weakness were to

master you at this time, would be closed to you for ever, and there is no key which could undo that door for you again. If you were an only son it would be different; but you are one of so many that each must go to work; and I know very certainly, as I think you also know, that however greatly your father may mourn you for a time, he will be soon consoled, and feel thankful that you were steady to your purpose." There had been, apparently, a thought of blotting out the latter part of the last sentence: the first words had a line run through them; but there it stood, and the next words were, "However, I shall be very thankful when it is over for you both; only don't give in, for my sake as well as your own. I shall be more glad than I can tell when I know you fairly launched, and your boat sailing safely on the same sea as mine. Your father would be displeased at my writing this; but your mother gave me a right over you, and as I am no longer in his house, I cannot but say what I have."

Hubert's satisfied nod, as he read, nearly caused his father to wish that he had yielded to the sudden temptation which the sight of the letter had raised,—to leave it forgotten in the bag; while Hubert pocketed it, his courage raised, and his spirits dancing at the touch of the old sympathy. A satisfaction, deep and soothing, filled his heart in the sense of yielding without question to the hand that had guided his steps all his years. Here, at last, was a voice saying, "This is your way." Yet, as he sat after lessons that morning, and wrote his answer, with the sentence at the beginning, "If I don't say anything about the chief thing in your letter, it is because I have been told not to," he wondered all the time what had come to him, changing him so from what he had been, and knew in his heart he was being untrue to himself; pretending to himself that he was at peace, while there was one corner in his mind, and many things in his memory, which he was keeping tightly closed, and would not look into, for fear.

It was a Saturday morning, two weeks were almost run of his month for thought, and it startled him, as the fact struck him. He was floating onwards with his eyes shut,—whither? “To what I want and will have,” was the answer. “Yes, I will never lose uncle, nor see 'Bert in my place, nor give up for nothing my happiness for life. Another fortnight would soon be gone; and then—— It was safer for comfort to leave thinking, and to return to his letter; which he did, finishing off with, “I am just going to spend the afternoon with Harry. We are going fern hunting for Geraldine’s fernery, which was scorched while she was with us. Don’t I wish you were coming too!” He folded and directed it; and it was gone to the post before he returned that evening, or other words might have closed it.



CHAPTER XX.

LOST.

One who has known in storms to sail
I have on board :
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.

IT was directly after dinner that Hubert started for the Grange, going alone, running and walking alternately over the often-trodden way. It was warm and pleasant : a bright sun shining, and he was surprised, on going round through the square garden to his usual entrance, to find the window shut, and one curtain dropped across. He turned, and went back to the hall ; and crossing it, met Dr. Scott.

"You haven't been telling Harry he is not to go out to-day?" he said, as he put out his hand. "We are going up to the moor."

His hand was taken and held. "No, Hubert : I have not. But he has been told so."

The Doctor's voice was altered ; and, looking up at him, Hubert saw that his eyes were dim with tears.

"Dr. Scott, what is it? Who is with him? Is Dermot come back?" he gasped out, not knowing what he said.

"Were you not here yesterday?"

"No : not since Thursday. Papa wanted me yesterday."

"My poor boy!" was all the Doctor said, still holding his hand, which was now trembling in his grasp.

"Please tell me," he asked, piteously: "what is the matter?"

"Hubert, can you be brave, if I let you go in? For their sakes you must be, and for your own sake you must go to him; for, alas, my poor boy, you will never go to the moor with him again!" Hubert stood motionless, looking as if turned to stone, his eyes fixed upon the Doctor's face. "I wish you had come yesterday. I doubt his knowing you now; though, perhaps, the sight of you may rouse him. Come in with me."

But Hubert hung back. "Tell me what is the matter," he gasped, shivering.

"Poor boy: I have startled you too much. But how could it be helped?" the Doctor said to himself. "He was taken ill yesterday; and they sent for me. He was no worse than he has often been,—one of his usual attacks. This morning, when I came early, he was suffering more, and I did not like his look, and came back again at twelve. Since then — Oh, Hubert: it is a bitter thing sometimes to feel how small, and of how little use our best skill is! I would have given" —

The Doctor broke down, and, wringing Hubert's hand, walked to the hall window.

The boy stood where he left him a minute; then made for the passage leading to the sitting-room. But when he reached the door, it was only to turn back again, and wander round the hall blindly. The Doctor took hold of his shoulder, and drew him into the dining-room, thinking wine would be the best cure for his blanched cheeks; but he only touched his lips with it, setting down the glass, saying, "No: I can't. I must go to him." And they went back together.

"You will try and command yourself for his poor father's and sister's sake," Dr. Scott said. "I know you can." And turning the handle, opened the door for him, and went away again.

The soft voice, weak indeed, but the same, and the words, "I think I heard his step," reassured Hubert somewhat, and stilled the violent beating of his heart. Colonel Dennis was sitting at the head of the couch, and Geraldine kneeling by it, with her back to the window. O'Hara was no longer lying flat; but was leaning back, breathing heavily, one hand in his father's, the other moving restlessly: he was wrapped in a dressing gown, and his hair was tossed over his head. As Hubert came forward, Mrs. Wibmer appeared through the opposite door, and, with coaxing words, began to tempt the boy to let her give him "only one spoonful" of what she had brought; but he turned away his head, saying again, "I am sure I heard Hu.;" while his father motioned the nurse aside, with the words, "It is vain to trouble him." She drew back, sobbing; and Geraldine, putting out her hand, looked up at Hubert, with a face rigid with misery, and pulled him to her side. She seemed unable to speak, to say he was there; but touched her brother's cheek, and his wandering eyes turned upon his friend, and, with a little cry, he drew his hand from his father's hold, and flung his arm over Hubert's neck. He had no thought how long he knelt there, with the soft cheek pressed against his, as the child's head slipped to the edge of the pillow; but he grew calmer at last, and whispered, as he moved, "I came to dig ferns for you: I never knew you were ill."

The motion and words disturbed the sufferer: he had fallen into a half-stupor; and again his hand was tossed back to his father's, with a weary sigh.

"I don't think we want the ferns now: do we, Gerry?" he said. And, at the words, the first tears rose in Hubert's eyes; but he choked down the feeling, and drawing forward his usual seat, put himself in his old place. He began to breathe more freely, as the silent minutes went by, and he looked round, and saw everything exactly as it always was, except for a few signs of illness,—bottles and glasses on the table,—and the still figures of Colonel Dennis and Geraldine,

both with eyes fixed upon the child. But O'Hara's next words startled him. "Why don't you call Mr. Oswald, Hu., when I ask you? I want him."

Hubert explained that he was at sea. "But I have heard from him to-day; and he sends you his love."

"Send him mine,—my very best," was the answer. "I have never fed Bully to-day. Will you, Hu., always, when I can't?"

"Yes: always," said Hubert.

And the boy talked on wandringly; mingling reminiscences of his eldest brother and his mother with Dermot, and events of days just passed; till his father whispered loving words, soothing him with strange tenderness, as it sounded to Hubert; while he every now and then pressed some drops from a glass by him between the lips, which Hubert started to see had grown nearly colourless since his arrival.

The sun shone in through the unshaded side of the window, and touched at last the foot of the couch where Geraldine was resting now; and Hubert knew he must have been there for hours: the sun never reached them there in these September days till it was lowering.

Presently the door opened, and Dr. Scott came in again, took the little limp hand in his a few minutes, spoke a few words, to which no answer came, raised the dropped lids from the closing eyes, but met no look of intelligence; and after a vain effort to part the shut lips with the spoon which Colonel Dennis had for some time laid aside, stooped and kissed the white forehead, and, with a murmured "God keep you," left the room.

His coming and actions roused Hubert to full consciousness of what it was they were waiting for, and as the door closed he stood up, and bending over the child, whom he had before thought sleeping, he cried low in his ear, "Harry, Harry dear: speak to me," while he took the now motionless hand and moved it up and down.

Colonel Dennis bent forward to mark if he still heard. The soft-shaded eyes unclosed once more, and the feeble arms made a motion upwards, Hubert lifted them, and they met round his neck, while he pressed his lips in a long, passionate kiss to the blue ones, which he shuddered to think were silent for ever. But they moved again, and the whispered words he caught, were, "I can't remember it: say it, do."

Hubert looked at Geraldine, who had come close to them. "It is your verse," she said; and as he seemed to give a little motion of assent, she repeated steadily, "My heart and my flesh fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Again there was a little movement, and a smile flitted over his face as he looked dreamily from one to the other; and his arms slipped from Hubert's neck.

Presently the sun went down; and again the nurse came in, and placed a lamp upon the table, and took her place at his head, and it was she who at last said: "He is gone."

The Colonel bent his head over him, listened a moment, and with a deep groan threw his arm round him. Hubert looked from him to Geraldine, and reading the truth in her face he dropped the cold hand he had been holding with frightened suddenness, and with one more glance at the face on the pillow, slipped quickly from the room,—his one thought to put distance between himself and what lay there,—hurrying on with a vague notion that once back in the park, the horror in his heart would melt away, and he would feel again as he felt when he ran through it in the afternoon.

The bailiff's voice hailed him as he reached the palings, rushing on wildly. "Ah, Master Hubert, you and I are always home late on Saturday nights. The little gentleman is better I suppose? Dr. Scott said he was ill this morning."

Hubert stared at him through the darkness. The commonplace words seemed to bring him back to the reality of where he was, and where he had been: he cried out as if in

pain, and ran forward, leaving Mr. Cox looking after him, astonished. But at the foot of the slope, before mounting to the house, he stopped again, breathless: "How could he go in and face them all? what should he do to get rid of this misery? what was it that had happened to him? where could he hide himself?"

He was spent, and felt giddy, without knowing why. His knees trembled under him, and he crawled on at last with the feeling that home must bring comfort; at least he could go and shut himself into his room in the dark, away from the light of the stars, and the rising moon, and might perhaps forget that face he had looked at.

The great clock struck three-quarters past eight as he crept into the hall; and the thought of his neglected lessons turned his steps to the library, where, mechanically, he sought the corner of the bookcase, and began stupidly to take down book after book without seeing the names or knowing at all which he should need.

"You are very late in beginning your work," said the tutor's voice from the other end of the room. "You must try and deny yourself, and leave O'Hara earlier."

The books slipped from Hubert's hold; and with a cry, "Oh, what shall I do?" he staggered forward to the table, and flinging himself down across it, lay there, moaning.

Mr. Maynard half rose, leaning on the arm of his chair. "Hubert, what is the matter? Have you hurt yourself?" he asked, astonished. "Where have you been? Come, get up and tell me what is wrong."

Hubert drew himself up and wandered across the room, and back again, his hands clenched. "I have done it, I have done it:" he groaned out. "Mr. Cox said it always came, and so did you. But I wouldn't care; I vowed I wouldn't think: and oh—how can I bear this?"

Mr. Maynard was frightened; and coming to him, took hold of his arm. "Tell me what is wrong?" he said: "Don't go on roaming about like this," as the boy at-

tempted to draw himself away. "Stand quiet and tell me what is troubling you."

"Oh, why didn't I believe Mr. Cox! And it has come on them all, not only upon me. Oh, if I had only cared about obeying still. What shall I do?—Oh, what shall I do?"

"How can I tell you, Hubert, if you will not tell me what has happened? Is it that you have decided not to go to sea?" the tutor asked, that being the only cause of great grief he could think of just then as having come to him.

"No, I haven't," he cried, passionately, dragging away his arm, and going from him. "If I had, if I had, I shouldn't have seen him so." Then turning again suddenly as the tutor repeated, "Do try and tell me what has happened," he flung himself against him, clinging round his neck, unheeding who he was, only conscious of his own misery, and burst into bitter weeping.

"There, there, poor old man: what can all this be?" said the tutor, soothingly, pressing his hand on the boy's head as it lay on his shoulder, a thrill of joy passing through him as he felt the arms clinging to him: it was so long since comforting or support had been sought from him. "There now," he said, as the sobs and tears came more slowly, "you can tell me now what is grieving you so. Come and sit down and warm yourself: you are quite cold. I am glad I have a fire for you." He drew him to his own chair; but Hubert slipped upon the big stool near it, and rested his throbbing head upon his arms on his tutor's knee. "Now what is it that Mr. Cox and I have told you that has come true?"

Hubert shuddered; but on the question being repeated, answered low between his weary sounding sobs, "He said no punishment would be too bad if we meant to disobey, and you said evil pursued sinners."

"When did I? what of it?" Mr. Maynard said, puzzled. "What evil can have come to you?" he asked, after a

minute. "You have been at the Grange all this afternoon. Ah, O'Hara is not ill! is he?" The shuddering, gasping, half-smothered cry, as Hubert's arms were pressed more heavily upon his knee, told the truth, and the tutor's startled words, "He is never gone from you!" received no denial. He asked no more questions then, only speaking tender words once in awhile, as fresh outbursts of grief distressed him, till the drawing-room bell rang.

"I must go and read prayers," he said. "Stay here, and I will come back to you."

"Yes, come back, and bring me some water, please; and don't say a word to papa," Hubert said, earnestly. "I can't speak to him to-night."

"You shall see no one," was Mr. Maynard's promise; the keeping of which he found no difficulty in ensuring, as Mr. Raymond did not appear in the drawing-room; and when the tutor, looking graver than ever, replied to their questions that Hubert was with him in the library, Osbert and May thought it prudent to ask no further. He was lying on the rug with his face hidden in his arms when Mr. Maynard returned to him. He had ordered food and tea for him; but when it was brought it was hard to prevail upon him, grown torpid with exhaustion and misery as he was, to move, or touch what he prepared for him. He insisted, however, saying, as he saw the last piece eaten, "There, you will be able to sleep now; you would have lain awake half the night else, and nothing is so bad as that."

The boy raised his heavy eyes to his face a minute. "There will be the waking in the morning, anyway, and all the days to live through;" and he rose and began again his restless wandering up and down the room. Mr. Maynard let him alone, and, sitting by the fire, watched him and the flames alternately. It was no use talking, for there was no comfort that he could bring him.

"I shall go to bed, sir," he said at last, coming to his side: "it is time, and I am so tired."

"Yes, do. I wish your uncle were here for you," the tutor said, holding his hand. "He would know what to say to you."

"No, he wouldn't," Hubert said; "for he would say to me what he says to himself. Oh, I don't know how I can bear it."

"God help you, my poor child," the tutor said, rising and drawing him into his arms. "There are some things we must live through alone; but still I wish I could send for your uncle for you." Then as Hubert said hurriedly, "Oh, no: he would only make it worse," he added, looking anxiously at him, "You are not keeping that fancy about punishment still? you must not. You have no ground for saying such a thing, and it is only adding bitterness to pain."

"It is no fancy, Mr. Maynard. I know what I was doing. I said I didn't care what came; but oh, I never dreamt of this!"

Again the tears came fast, and despairing sobbing, and the tutor said, tenderly, "There, go to bed: you will be better there. I will come in and see you before you are asleep." And when that long, terrible half-holiday ended at last, Hubert was conscious, as he sank into the heavy sleep which lasted till morning, of a kiss upon his forehead, with the words, "God grant you peace of heart speedily."

"It was May's merry voice outside his door which roused him to his dread,—the pain of waking. Her call, "Hu., are you dreaming still? We have done breakfast; we shall be late for school," was not answered; and she pushed the door open, saying in surprise, "Are you in bed still?"

"I don't think Hubert will go to school this morning," said Mr. Maynard's voice behind her. "I am sorry you have woke him: I had warned Martha to leave him."

"Why: isn't he well? Was that the reason he didn't come up to prayers last night? I was afraid he had done his lessons badly."

"I wish it had been. No: he was learning a harder

lesson than any I ever set him ;” and as she looked up at him in startled wonder, he told her gently all he knew.

May's little school class, as well as Geraldine's and Hubert's, was without its teacher that morning, and there was sorrow and mourning through all the house at the Park.

Mr. Raymond half learned the cause from little Helen's broken words of consoling, as she clung on to Godfrey, “Don't cry. Nurse says he has gone away to dear mamma.” They were outside his door, and at sight of him the boy made his escape to finish his tears in secret ; while the child, lifted in her father's arms, could only answer his questions with, “It is poor Harry, papa,” and hid her face on his shoulder, half frightened at his startled exclamation at her words.

He hurried downstairs, still holding her close, and heard the truth from Mr. Maynard. The latter was hardly surprised, when his short story was told, and the first words of shocked distress and sympathy were spoken, to hear whispered, as the father bent to set down his little girl, “Alas, too, now, for myself !” He went in search of Hubert ; but his room was empty.

A little note had been brought to him as he was dressing ; and with it the bullfinch's cage. Geraldine wrote,—

“Do not stay away : come as much as you like. My father says the same : he wishes you to come. I send you the bird. He would have liked it to be so ; and I cannot hear it call. You can whistle to it, and it will be happy again. Come soon. G. D.”

Hubert saw he was wanted ; and hanging the bird in safety in his window, crept downstairs, only bent on avoiding everyone ; and was soon flying across the park, fearing recall, yet shrinking with such painful nameless dread at sight of the darkened Grange that he had nearly turned away again.

Geraldine heard his hesitating step outside the room door,

and opening it drew him in, and the next minute her arm was round his neck, and he was sobbing on her shoulder.

"You must be my brother, now," she whispered, kissing his cheek. "Poor Hu.: you have been made to fill one emptied place; there are two for you now." Hubert's return kiss gave the promise he could not speak; and she said, "Come and sit down, and I will tell you all you must be wanting to know." He wondered to see her so calm. She looked very white and weak, as though she had been ill, as she lay down on the sofa, from which she had risen to meet him, with the excuse, "I have been awake two nights, and am glad to lie quiet, and rest, and think."

"To think!" repeated Hubert, bitterly, struggling to regain composure to equal hers; but unsuccessfully, as the empty place, where the couch had always stood, spoke even more plainly than his memory of the day before.

"Yes: it has all come upon me so suddenly," she said. "It is so hard to believe it. I keep on wondering why God has taken my last away. But, oh, Hubert, he has been saved your loss!" His look at her said so pitying that he had not been saved his, that she added, "Yes: but you are strong to bear it."

"What has that to do with it?" he cried, passionately; and, rising, went away out through the window, down into the garden, and threw himself down beyond the yew hedge.

He shrank even from the touch of her gentle grief-stricken voice. It was not till the Church bells sounded for morning service that he roused himself, and dried his tears. Their tones recalled that happy Sunday when he had waited in the Church porch to go with O'Hara for the first time through the doorway. The memory of the service followed; and then of the hymn which they had sung, and learnt together afterwards. It brought fresh but quieter tears; and when he stood up, after a while, and went back to the house, it was with the truth taken into his heart, for the first

time, that the presence of the Saviour, which he had already learned it would be joy to reach, was not a vague *somewhere*,—it was the home where Harry was, and where he should find him again.

He went up the steps, and reseated himself by Geraldine's side, with a sad, "I beg your pardon. I couldn't help it." They sat there long together, sometimes silent, sometimes talking, as the girl went over the history of the last two days. There was little to tell, and what there was might have been told as well of any other days of suffering and illness as of the last of that cherished life. "If I had only known before," said Hubert, as she finished. "I should have sent for you, of course, had I known of danger. It was only in the morning that he became so much worse; and you were saved seeing him suffer. Thank God for those last quiet hours."

It was what the boy could not speak of; and they sat still again, till the servant knocked, to ask if Geraldine would see Mr. Prescott; and they rose to meet the old clergyman, who, with a tender spoken, "My poor children: I am glad you are together," made them sit by him, and talked to them comfortable words of sympathy and hope. Then he knelt with them, giving thanks for the one taken home from sorrow and pain, and asking for strength and patience for those left behind, and grace and guidance for them, that they might reach where he was. As he rose from between them, he laid a hand on each head, and blessed them as they knelt; Geraldine adding her earnest Amen; Hubert feeling gloomily that no blessing was deserved by him.

The short visit seemed to bring to the girl what she had needed; and though she lay for a long time after, quietly crying, she seemed less crushed and able to begin to lay hold of the hope that could bring rejoicing. But Hubert sat with his head in his hands; and after looking up two or three times, as if he wanted to ask something, said, quickly, "Geraldine, I must see him. May I go?"

"Oh, do!" she said. "And don't hurry back: stay as long as you will."

It was long he did stay; only leaving the room at Geraldine's entreaty that he would come and sit down to dinner with her. His first refusal changed to assent, at the thought of the painful dreariness of that first solitary meal.

She lay sleeping for some hours, as the afternoon went on; and either at her side, or longer in the dimness of the other room, by the other sleeper, Hubert thought and remembered, resolved and prayed, and rose at last to go home in the twilight. It seemed hard to part with one another when the time came, feeling, as both did, that the other was all of Harry that was left; but it was a gleam of positive pleasure to Hubert, in the midst of the gloom that was round him, to know that Geraldine's words were truth: "I don't know what I should have done without you to-day. It has been the greatest comfort to me having you. You will always seem to me to bring back part of what I have lost."

"Thank you, very much, for saying so," was his eager answer, as he looked into the face he had always thought the fairest he had ever seen, now looking at him full of affection and tenderness. "It is the only thing which will ever make me feel in the least happy again, if you will let me be as if I were your brother really." He would willingly have stayed on later, so much did he dread encountering the home sympathy; but the thought of his father forced his steps away.

He knew he was not at all too soon in his return, when he went to the study and was received with a reproachful though pitying look, and the words, "My son, where have you been? Did you think I could not feel for you, that you should shun me." His answer was short: he could not bear pity; he shrank, he hardly knew why, from his father, and would have been mortified to have shown his suffering before him, and drew back from his caressing, out-spoken sympathy, dreading to have his hardy-gained

composure upset. Mr. Raymond was hurt at his coldness, and repellant manner, and augured more despondingly than ever for his own fears.

It was another trial to face the school-room party, and hardly more graciously met. Tea was just over, and each vied with the other to show their feeling for him by unusual attentions, making him hot and uncomfortable, and vexed with himself that he should not be grateful. He hurried through his meal, and slipped away to the library, where his tutor's silent kindness was what suited him best. He hardly spoke, and never asked questions, only showing plainly he was welcome.

It was there that most of the next week was passed: a dreary time indeed till the Friday came, when he was called to the Grange to take the place for the last time that Dermot should have filled. How he went through that day he could never quite remember. He had become dulled and stupified with the many days of the same oppression of grief, and felt ill, without knowing what was wrong with him, from want of taking either proper food or sleep, and his tutor only wished the funeral over, that his mind might be able to turn away from the one absorbing thought. What he most clearly remembered was the wild longing he had, as he stood beside Colonel Dennis at the head of the grave, to lay himself down upon the coffin and to be covered over out of sight of every one. To his strained mind it seemed to hold, of what he loved, so much beside what remained to him of Harry. With the first sound of the falling earth the sense of his loss was completed, he turned faint and giddy, and knelt down with his head against a near tombstone to keep himself from falling. The touch of the cold marble kept him conscious, though he heard Mr. Prescott's voice in a dream, and only moved at last at the touch of a hand upon his shoulder, to find himself nearly alone, most of his fellow-mourners gone, and the crowd which had filled the churchyard dispersing.

"He is quite overdone, poor lad," Dr. Scott was saying behind him. "See to him, Mr. Maynard: get him away home, and keep him quiet, or he will suffer for it. Let him go to bed and have a long sleep."

"You will come home now?" his tutor said at his side, as the Doctor hurried away.

"No: I am going to Geraldine," he answered quickly; shaking his head as if to clear his sight, and unfastening the heavy cloak which enveloped him. "There, I shall not want that for the next funeral I go to:" and he threw it upon Mr. Maynard's arm.

"It will be very long, I trust, before you ever need another."

"I tell you I shan't need any for the next," Hubert said, excitedly. "No one will see what will be buried then, and the grave-digger and mourner will be the same unhappy wretch."

"Hubert, what are you saying?" Mr. Maynard said quickly, holding the boy's arm and shaking it. "You are talking without sense."

He looked round at him, and with a sad smile said, "I beg your pardon, sir: I was only saying out loud what I have been thinking often lately. Don't think I am out of my mind. I will tell you when that funeral is over, for I think it must come."

The tutor was alarmed, for though the manner was quieter, the words still sounded utterly without reason, and he again said, "You had better come home with me."

Hubert shook his head. "No: I am all right, I tell you. I must go to Geraldine: she is so miserable that Colonel Dennis wouldn't let her come."

"But you know your sister is with her."

"Yes: but I promised I would go back to her."

Osbert was seated in the carriage waiting for them, and as they turned from the churchyard gate he changed his wondering look at his brother's altered face for a sudden

hug, and the words, half choked with the tears which had flowed freely by the grave, "Dear old Hu., I am so sorry for you."

His first impulse was to draw himself away impatiently; but the next moment he bent forward again, returning the embrace, saying, "It seems odd for us to kiss each other, 'Bert, and makes one feel like being nursery children again: I only wish we were. There, now we have kissed and made friends," he added, with an attempt at a smile, and then turned his face against the side of the carriage, and stayed so till the short distance to the Grange was passed. Mr. Maynard remembered his words afterwards, and knew of what he had been thinking. Just then he had to touch Osbert's knee to stop the eager declaration on his lip that they were quite friends, and had no quarrel to make up. He was seriously uneasy about Hubert, thinking the shock and strain of feeling were beginning to tell on him, as he looked at the colourless cheek with the heavy fall from his hat resting against it. He lifted off the hat, pushed back the hair from his forehead, and, remembering the doctor's warning, urged again, "You had far better let me say now to drive straight home."

But Hubert shook his head, and presently got out to walk away, within the iron gates, where neither tutor nor brother might follow him. It was something still to feel himself so welcomed there, and to know the soft pink on Geraldine's cheek was called up by pleasure at his coming, as he knelt before her, holding her hands, and asking her solicitously whether she were better. May, who had tried every tender art in vain, as the poor girl lay with her head buried in the sofa pillows, giving in at last to overpowering grief, was relieved to see the instant quieting and cheering his presence brought; her tears were dried and she sat up answering him, and then rising, put together for him to take home with him little things of her brother's.

"I have put among them the book into which he copied

all the scraps he took a fancy to, as I often saw you together over it," she said, sitting down by him and opening it. "You didn't see, I think, what was the last thing he wrote in it;" while May said she must go, as papa had told her to be sure to be back before dark.

"Well, we shall soon not have to say good-bye at all," Geraldine said, as she kissed her fondly. "I can't help feeling you a poor little sacrifice."

"No: indeed you are changing my trouble, which was sure to have come soon, into what is bearable with you."

"What are you talking of?" the boy asked, looking up at them.

"Oh, Hu., I forgot you didn't know yet. Papa said I was not to worry you by telling you just now; but I suppose he would have told you himself to-morrow. Geraldine is to go to a lady near London, to school. She is a friend of Colonel Dennis', and he has asked papa if I might go with her. It isn't a regular school, only about six girls."

"But now: so soon!" Hubert cried, standing up and speaking quickly.

"Yes, Hu.: it does seem strange that such a thing could have been arranged about at this time," said Geraldine; "but my father cannot bear the thought of staying in this house another week. You know I told you some time ago that my dear mother has been gradually improving in health, and he has been advised to travel with her. Of course before it was a difficulty: there is nothing in the way now but me, and I am easily disposed of."

"Oh, Geraldine: next week did you say? and May?"

And as she saw his distressed look, "It will not matter so very much to you, dear Hu.: you will be gone yourself so soon; and for my part, it is little consequence where I am now, though indeed," she added, her voice trembling, "I suppose it will be dreadful, when it comes to it, to leave these rooms."

"I am quite sure it would be twenty times worse to stay

in them all alone," May said, and with another embrace she said good-bye again, and left them.

Hubert had sat down again, and was staring at the book.

"It was strange these were the last," Geraldine said, looking over him. "He little thought how soon the words would apply to himself. They are from a poem on the death of some little child."

With a start Hubert began to read :—

"Thine was a blessed flight,
Ere sorrow clouded, and ere sin could slay ;
No weary course was thine, no arduous fight,
And but an hour on earth of labour light,
With hire for all the day.
Can aught be more than this ?
Yes, Christian, yes :
It is much more to live,
And a long life to the good fight to give ;
To keep the faith, the appointed race to run,
And then to win the praise,
'Servant of God, well done !' "

He looked up at her as he finished, with swimming eyes. "Yes, he is the happiest after all : no fear for him of"—As he spoke he hesitated, and closed the book with a strangled sob.

Geraldine put her hand on his shoulder. "Hu., you mustn't speak like that, as if you envied him. You have happiness to look forward to which he never had." He made no answer. "For my part, I quite agree with what the verse says. With Harry it was different : only years of continual patience and submission in prospect, and, Dr. Scott tells us now, certain increase of suffering. Dear darling, it comes to me with a start of joy when I wake suddenly at night, and am just going to sit up and listen if all is still in his room, how far he is now from all fear of restless sleep or painful wakings."

She paused : and Hubert said, "Don't mistake me,

Geraldine,—don't fancy I have the slightest wish to die yet ; but yet what wouldn't I give to be away from all this, as he is."

"Oh, hush, hush, Hu. ! You only thirteen, and talking like that. You are tired, poor boy, that is it : you are looking quite unwell. I'll ring for tea, that is what you want. You know Mr. Raymond says I may have you for tea every evening till we go,—that is, till Thursday next. There now, don't you look like that, as if you were losing all the world with May and me." He moved from his seat, helping her clear the table of the books and papers she had been sorting. "Hu. dear, I can't bear to see you so," she said, tenderly, as she saw him stop to wipe a tear off one of them.

"I am sorry, Gerry. I didn't mean to come here to bother you. It is only everything coming at once, and I have grown such a muff." He rubbed his hand across his eyes, and taking the rest of the things from her, finished the work for her.

"You can't think how kind Mr. Raymond was," she said, after a little. "You know he came to see me on Wednesday, and sat with me a long time. He said he was so glad to think of May being with me, and that I am always to pass the holidays with her while my father is abroad. He couldn't have been kinder, and kissed me just like one of his own children when he went away."

"You seem to think there is some astonishing wonder in his being kind to you," Hubert said, looking at her.

She smiled, saying, "Well, it is not every father who would consent to parting with his daughter, and in such a hurry as he has : it only shows how unselfish he is. It cannot be so very pleasant a thing to such a tender, loving father as he is, to see his house gradually emptying of his children in this way. His eyes quite filled the other day when he spoke of your going, Hu. : how he lets you go I can't imagine."

"No: it is odd," the boy said, in a hard dry tone. And turned the subject, by asking about the new school, and how May fancied it.

As Hubert was leaving the gates again that evening, and was standing for a minute, looking up at the house, remembering the first time he had entered it, and the year so full of happiness that had passed since then, a step fell on the gravel path; and the next minute he saw, in the moonlight, the figure of Colonel Dennis coming towards him.

"Stay a moment, Hubert," he called; and he went back to him. "I wanted to tell you I found this under his pillow, and only saw this morning it has your name in it."

He held in his hand the little Bible.

"Oh, yes!" Hubert said, eagerly, taking it.

"It is a gift, I see, from your uncle," the Colonel said, regretfully; and Hubert handed it back.

"He has given me another, if you would like to keep it."

He felt half afraid of making the offer; but the book was instantly taken, with a warm "Thank you."

"He never had it far from him; and it led him where I shall hope to meet him again. In your sorrow it may bring you gladness to know that, humanly speaking, to you I owe it that I have one child in Paradise. Take a father's life-long gratitude; and if you ever need a friend, come to me. Your father is rich still, to possess in you such a blessing as, through you, my child has been to me this last year. But, alas, it makes the loss terribly harder!"

And squeezing the boy's hand, without waiting for an answer, the Colonel left him, and Hubert turned homewards.

"There," he said to himself, as he went on, with slow steps, "I have come down this road for the last time to see him at the end of it; now to go back, and make up my mind which is my road to finding him again. Oh, uncle, uncle: if I might only feel sure I might keep you still!"

To lose you too, and all I care for most in the world, and go on without it all" ——

He had reached the churchyard stile, and was over it, and beside the newly-turned earth next minute.

Mr. Raymond, lying on his study sofa, dreamily watching the firelight, and wondering why the knock at the door, for which he was waiting, was so long delayed, would have shuddered, could he have seen the still figure, kneeling on the moist ground, in the moon-whitened mist. Could he have heard the words spoken in the silence, and the deep unchildlike groan of suffering which interrupted them, he would hardly have refrained from speaking those which he soon felt tempted to say, as Hubert came in at last, and sat down by his side, his eyes half closed with weariness, and a hopeless crushed look about him. The words he did speak to him seemed to miss his understanding; though he assented to whatever was said in a dull apathetic tone, retreating from the faintest mark of fondness.

Mr. Raymond could not deceive himself that it was that day's work alone, or even the week's grief, that had worked all this change, however much for the past days he had been trying to do so. He knew that the few words, "Hubert, I shall send you to sea," would have power to undo it. He could hear beforehand the cry of delight that would follow, and see the speedy recovery from the depression of grief to fresh boyish spirits, and happy hopefulness, and, more to be desired still, the return to confidence, and affectionate manner towards himself. But then the parting, the loneliness,—the need of him at every turn. No: he could not himself destroy the one last way of escape he had built his hopes on so long. This day naturally had been the most trying to so young a mourner, and one so keen in feeling.

"Hu., my son, you had better be early to bed: it has been a long sad day for you."

"Thank you, papa. I shall go then," he said, rising, as though glad to be dismissed; then turning suddenly, he

said, "Papa, will you let me tell you to-morrow what I mean to do? Oh, please, do! I cannot bear to wait another whole week."

Mr. Raymond was startled, and answered decidedly, "No, Hubert. It is wrong to be so persistent;" then added, more gently, "I am afraid you must be wanting to act on impulse, if you are wishing to fix yourself before fresh thoughts may lead to another change. A good reason will remain a good reason for seven days as well as one. I am only anxious that the reason that guides your decision be a good one, and so will bear looking at as well seven years hence as seven days. Now, good night, my boy."

"Good night, papa. I hope your head will be better to-morrow."

"Thanks, dear son. And don't you be worrying yourself about anything to-night. The world will look brighter to you after a night's rest. If you have lost much, you know you have much left; and no son was ever more loved than you are, believe me, my own boy."

"The worse for me," was the answer that rose in Hubert's heart, though another came to his lips, and gratified his father's ears.



CHAPTER XXI.

FOR HIS SAKE.

"I have beheld with most respect the man
Who knew himself, and knew the ways before him,
And from among them chose considerately ;
And, having chosen, with a stedfast mind
Pursued his purpose."—*Sir Henry Taylor.*

"IF you please, sir, can I speak to you?" The housemaid was knocking at Mr. Maynard's door in the early morning, and repeated both words and knock more urgently, as there was a little delay before notice was taken of either. Always the earliest astir in the house, the tutor was soon at the door asking what she wanted ; adding as he saw her face, "Is anything wrong?"

"Oh, if you please, sir, come to Master Hubert's room. I went in to call him, and he is not there, and his bed is just as I turned it down last night : I don't dare to go to master."

Without waiting to hear more, Mr. Maynard pushed past her, and was satisfying himself next minute of the truth of her story. There were the untumbled sheets in their smooth foldings,—all the room in its evening neatness, with the morning sun shining into one corner, and the little red-breasted bird greeting it with its soft song.

"Oh, sir, what can have become of him?"

"Leave me to find out," said the tutor, quietly : "You did

quite rightly to come to me. I would not for much have your master startled just now. Perhaps he is up with Master Osbert: I will go and find him."

He spoke more quietly than he felt, and was certain in his own mind that he was not upstairs. He pursued his quest, however; but was soon in the room again, looking round uneasy, and wondering. The open Bible on the writing table, and the little book he well remembered lying with the mark across the leaves at the date of the day before, belied his first sudden fear of any following of Dermot's example. He took up the book as he stood thinking,—“The Master's Rule,” it was titled,—and glanced over the words, wondering what might have been the teaching before the boy's eyes the evening before: they were not such as to have made any wrong-doing easy. “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.” Then the warning: “That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes;” and the sentence followed, “Let the habit of your life be to wait like the man at the helm for the voice of the captain.”

As he put it down, a sheet of paper lying near, much blotted and written over, caught his attention. The handwriting, the same as he had so continually under his eye, made it the natural thing to him to begin reading it, and once started he went on. The paper had been creased down the middle, and across the top of it was written, “Grounds for deciding;” on either side were the two significant words, “To go,”—“To stay.” He read on. The first column was filled with boyish reasoning that called up a smile on the reader's face, as a glance took it in from the first sentence: “The navy is the best profession there is;” to the last: “It would be ungrateful to uncle to change, when he has done so much for me.” A scrawl below seemed as if patience had failed to add more to what was all summed up

in the words, "My one wish is to go : I have hoped for it all my life." That the tutor already knew, and looked with more curiosity to the other list,—a mass of blots, corrections, and half-finished sentences,—the first whole one coming after two or three obliterated attempts : "Papa wants me to stay. I am his,"—the adjective was inked over, and the word "son" stood alone. Then came two or three more blotted sentences, followed by : "Papa wants to send Osbert to cure him of his nonsense, and not to be worried about him." A line or two more struck out, and Mr. Maynard started to see his own name : "If I go, Mr. Maynard must go, and lose his home, and the only one left who loves him." Whatever the words were that came after that, the tutor left them unread, as he laid down the paper with the sudden consciousness that it had never been meant for his eyes. "Is that a reason he thinks of weight enough to shape his course : God bless him. The only one, indeed!" He stood for some minutes looking from the window, then turned, wondering where next he might direct his search for his missing pupil. The door into Oswald's room was not fastened close ; he went to it and pushed it open, and, look-into the gloom, crossed by lines of sunlight coming through the cracks of the fastened shutters, saw that any fears he might have had were groundless. Hubert was sunk down in front of the big chair near the window, his head on his arm on the seat, sound asleep.

The tutor as he stood watching him, wondered to himself with greater anxiety than he had thought himself capable of ever feeling again, "How has that question been solved?" He was struck, as he studied the sleeping face, with the change that had come over it from what it had been as he remembered it in the early summer ; the boyish roundness of cheek was gone, and the bones showed far more than was pleasant to the watcher's eyes,—telling too plainly of childhood passed ; the mouth had lost its childish softness, and a grave sadness was on the lips, not set there by sleep.

The boy looked wearied out, sleeping in his uncomfortable position as motionless as if in bed, and with a heaviness that showed the thoughts had not long ceased that had left his lashes wet.

Mr. Maynard would not disturb him ; but went back to his own room, answering the servant's question as he passed her. "He is quite safe : he had only fallen asleep in Mr. Oswald's room. Don't go there."

So Hubert slept on in the dim room unroused. There was no morning bell to sound that day,—an order given for Mr. Raymond's sake, too often to please the tutor, but for once not regretted. But the stirrings of life through the house, shutting and opening doors, running feet and voices calling, did the bell's work presently ; and Hubert opened his eyes and moved his stiffened arm, slowly remembering how he had come there, and the long night of trouble that had gone before ; his mind coming back from its half-dreaming state at sight of his Sunday black, still unchanged on Monday morning. He stood up quickly, a look at the hour helping to briskness in his movements, and he was not much behind the rest when he appeared in the breakfast-room, a cold bath and grey morning suit so changing his look, that Mr. Maynard, as he welcomed him, could nearly have thought the sight he had already had of him a morning dream of his own, but for the dark lines under his eyes, and the perfect silence with which he sat through most of the meal.

It was a sadly changed breakfast party, the one he joined, from what it had been not very long since. May's bright face no longer glanced up at him from over her coffee-pot and row of cups. Miss Sturt sat there now, and there were only two cups for her to fill,—her own and the tutor's, who sat in Mr. Raymond's place at the bottom of the table ; Godfrey and Minnie, one each side of the governess, and his twin brother completed their number.

"How late you are, Hu.," Osbert said, pushing their jug

of milk across to him. "I can't think how you can bear to eat your porridge half cold."

"I don't mind how it is when I am hungry," he said; and sat down, looking at his plate as if its contents would choke him.

"Leave it, and send up your cup for some coffee instead," Mr. Maynard said, removing his plate; while Miss Sturt raised her voice to hush the outcry that they would all have coffee if Hubert might.

"I thought people always ate breakfast and drank tea, Hu.," said his little sister, looking up at him: "and you are drinking your breakfast."

"Oh, leave me alone, Minnie!" he said, taking a piece of bread and beginning to break it up nervously in his plate, looking round quickly towards the door at some sound without. "Is papa going to get up this morning, Foster?" he asked of the footman as he came in.

"He is nearly dressed now, sir."

"Is he better this morning?" was the next quick question. "Can I see him?"

"He has just sent me to say he wished to speak to you before you begin your lessons."

Hubert's colour changed. "Very well," he answered, and hastily emptying his cup got up and left the room. He stopped his steps in his own window. "Now, once more," were his grave words to himself, as he stood with one hand on the table, and the other against his side trying to still the quick beating of his heart; "and for ever this time,—for ever. For all my life, and beyond it."

For a few minutes his mind seemed to whirl without power of thought. "I *will* see if I am right once again," he said, impatiently rubbing his hand across his forehead. "That is no use, anyway;" and he took the blotted paper and crumpled it. "It is nonsense trying to write such things." Then, after thinking awhile, "This is just it: either myself or two other people made happy. Yes: there

is no getting out of it ; and indeed with papa it is not only making him happy. I know what he wishes as well as if he had chosen to say it : and it just comes to obeying him,—any way to honouring him.”

There was another long pause of thought then, as again through his mind passed the old tempting reasonings : of the right of choice given over into his hands ; his duty to choose for his own advancement in life, sure to be quick and certain with his uncle's help and interest ; and the question stronger than all, “Is it right to spoil my whole life's happiness for the sake of a few years of pleasure to papa? I shall be obliged to go somewhere then, anyway. I know uncle thinks it would be folly.” These and many others rose, confusing with their plausible seeming ; and then the sharpest question of all, “What right have I to go against uncle? It is taking on me to judge opposite to him ; and when he has told me what I am to do, it is just disobeying him to his face.” How often that grieving thought had come already, the one best loved ; wounded, disappointed, and his wishes neglected, and the hand which had led him all his life let go. But yet, was it not that very hand which had led him to the highest Guide? Yes : it was uncle himself who had taught the lesson that but One has the right to rule, and under Him those only whom He has appointed. Alas, though he had chosen to consider uncle as his captain, the fact remained unchanged that above him his father was his God-appointed commander ; and uncle's will must yield before his. Times without number already such reasoning had passed through his mind, and as self-will had died away more and more, and the desire after perfect obedience grown more determined, the question had become plain before him, for though he now once again asked it, it was with the answer already known.

“It can all be put into very few words,” he said, slowly, to himself, after a time ; “and however much one turns it about, it always comes to that in the end : myself on the

one side,—myself and uncle at least,—and papa on the other ; and there is no single way out of it that I can find.”

“Oh, Harry, Harry: if I only had you left! Oh, how I want you!” With a heavy sigh he spoke the longing words, looking up at the face which always seemed to be watching him from above the fireplace. “Well, it is no good putting it off if it must be,” as the quarter to nine sounded up from the Church clock ; but still he lingered, unable to face the thought that in another few minutes his long balanced fate would be fixed, his life’s hope gone. A bitter feeling against his father, a feeling he was constantly struggling against, came back to him, and made it harder to think of going to him. “It is a shame to be cross with him for loving me. But why doesn’t he love me as uncle does? He would have sent me off however much he wanted me. Oh, Maude: why did you go away and leave me to be the only one to him? Still if it is God’s will that I should do this, it is His will, too, for me, that papa should feel about me as he does ; and that ought to be enough.” His chest heaved, and his eyes slowly filled, and sitting down, with his elbows on the table, he hid his face in his hands, and for a time the tears fell fast. “There, I said I wouldn’t do that again,” he said, as he moved ; “making it ever so much harder to get over questions.” He rose, and walked to and fro through the two rooms, thinking to give his eyes time to cool ; but it was only to struggle with himself afresh in bitter distress. “If it were not for uncle, I could do it. But what will he think of me? And when he is back in here next time, and with nothing in common between us anymore,—I, just only the same to him as one of the others. Oh, it will kill me to lose him, and have him changed to me!”

He was back in his own room again, and the words faced him, “Whoso loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.” He read them with a stifled sob. “It is loving him better to be making such a work about this. And after all it is not losing him altogether ; not like that

soldier with his mother. Nor is staying at home with papa exactly like being torn in pieces by wild beasts." He tried to laugh at himself; but the pain was too real, and the choking feeling only grew stronger, as he turned again. "After all, I am more like the branded Roman Harry told me of,—the job done in one minute, and hope of ever again being his old self gone for ever." The thought of that story recalled more than it. He drew up his sleeve, and stood looking at the blue mark upon his arm. The miserable look gradually dispersed from off his face, his eyes grew brighter, and a look of resolution and courage changed his expression. "It was not for play I marked this. It means what it says for me,—I belong to Christ. Yes: for Him to save and take care of, and for me to obey. He is my Lord, and in truth I do love Him before all. My life is His; and if He says it is not to be passed in the way I like, He has the right to say so. When others have died for Him, or gone into slavery for Him, surely I might do this without quite so much fuss about it." Never before had the assuring words seemed to sound with such strength and meaning to his heart,—“My sheep hear my voice; and none shall pluck them from my hand.” And he lifted his head, while, with steadfast resolve, his heart made answer, “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”

“Master Hubert,” called Foster’s voice, at the door, “why don’t you go to master? You fidget him, when he is like this, keeping him waiting for you.”

“All right, Foster: I am coming.” Yet still he stood a few moments, till he was alone again; and then knelt by his table, where, quietly, in a few simple words, he offered his sacrifice of duty and service, asking for that which of himself he could not have,—a willing heart,—that it might be accepted as a free-will offering to the Lord. A prayer that he might be guided and blest still in his now dark-looking future, and be brought safely at last to the presence of his heavenly Master, came next; and then one urgent

petition, which he was half afraid of speaking, for fear of bringing back tears,—that uncle might not be very angry with him, and might think, at least, that he had done right ; and then he stood up.

As he delayed yet a minute, while replenishing his bird's seed and water glasses (forgotten before) he found himself beginning some lines of Bishop Hooper's, he had learnt the night before. He could not recollect them all ; and finding them in O'Hara's book of scraps, read them through.

“Content thyself with patience
With Christ to bear the cup of pain ;
Who can, and will thee recompense
A thousand-fold with joys again.
Let nothing cause thy heart to fail :
Launch out thy boat, hoist up the sail ;
Put from the shore,
And be thou sure thou shalt attain
Unto the port that shall remain
For evermore.”

He went away to his father's door with them running through his head.

Mr. Raymond's hand was held out to him. “Dear son, I was so grieved I could not let you in last night ; but I was really too ill to speak to anyone, even to you.”

“It was no matter, thank you, papa ; to me at least, I mean. I only came then because you had told me to. I was very glad to go up to bed : I was so awfully sleepy ; and when I did, I went sound asleep in my chair. Miss Sturt had been saying she was quite ashamed of me in Church. I nodded all through the sermon.”

He talked on quickly, feeling the nervous trembling of the hand that remained in his, hurrying on to make his usual morning inquiries.

When they were answered : “And was the whole night spent,” his father asked, with an attempt to speak lightly, “in trying to keep fixed to the decision that might not be

told at the right time? You look a little as if your eyes had not had their fair amount of shutting."

Hubert was thankful that this was all that was noticed amiss with them. He was not so easily deceived as to the story his father's face told, or that it was anything but intense anxiety that had brought the colour to his cheeks, and that kept his eyes fixed so intently upon his own. "Anyway, papa dear, I have come to tell it to you now," he said, quietly: "I shall stay at home with you." He knelt by him as he spoke, and kissed his cheek.

"Hubert, do you mean this?" And his father's hands were on his shoulders, holding him off, that he might again look in his face, and read there the confirmation of his words. "Is this your final purpose fixed?"

"Did you think it could not be, papa? You look as if you could not believe me."

"I had thought—the other way—after all the loss that—Oh, my boy, God be praised!" and the tight pressure in which for a few seconds he was held, told Hubert more than any more words what the effect of an opposite decision on his part would have been. He drew himself away, saying with a faint smile, "You are not displeased, papa, then, to have the plague of me still?"

His father looked at him, then rose suddenly and crossed the room, coming back again to look in his face; then again turned away, still unable to speak. Hubert was surprised: he knew his father was fond of him; but he could not understand the reason for any such excess of agitation at hearing he was not to lose him. "Papa, what is the matter?" he said at last. "Come and sit down: you ought not to be standing, you will tire yourself."

"Hubert," his father said low, recovering his voice as he came to his side, "you little think the joy you have brought me. Not since your mother's death has any such been given me; and indeed I never thought to feel such in life again."

"Then I think, papa, if that is true, you had no right to give me the chance of taking it away from you," the boy said, looking up at him with grave eyes; adding, "You had given that to me, though, long ago. But you ought to have told me."

"My son, would your face, and the bodily half of you, have given what your willing presence will now every day of my life. No: it is your will to stay which is as precious as yourself. Thank God for the preservation to me of my most precious blessing!" Mr. Raymond's voice failed again as he spoke his thanksgiving, with his hand on the boy's head. Hubert was thankful that all agitation of feeling was quieted within himself, and his father's had no power to move it again. He took his hand and held it by way of something to do, but sat silent, beginning to think how he could get away safe from the questions he dreaded.

"Hu.," Mr. Raymond said, sitting down and regarding him, "I had quite made up my mind that you would decide to go the week before last. You have lost your greatest attraction here now."

Hubert winced. It was like touching a tender spot even to have that time mentioned. He answered, with heightened colour and some tone of surprise in his voice, "I don't see exactly what that had to do with it: one doesn't let a decision of that sort depend upon any such reason as that. But, papa, it is time to go to lessons now."

"You need not hurry just yet. I daresay 'Bert is keeping Mr. Maynard employed. Have you told him yet? He will be pleased."

Hubert stood up. "I really must go, papa: he says I am becoming dreadfully unpunctual. Of course now you won't send him away?"

"Surely not, dear son: you will need him now." Then with a sudden change of tone, "Hubert, it is not for him you are staying?"

Again the boy's eyes looked round at him with surprise

in them. "I am very glad for him ; but surely that would be an unequal thing to weigh with one's profession for life."

"Then, Hubert, what is it that has decided you? You have not told me yet."

He turned his head away again and moved uneasily. He had not at all decided what answer he could give to such a question. But his father, seeing his troubled look and his hesitation, and wondering at it, having hoped for only one answer, relieved his embarrassment by putting his question earnestly in a different form: "My son, you are not giving up what you still feel would be your happiness, to secure mine? for that I will not suffer. Are you, after all, only sacrificing yourself for *my* sake?"

The boy's cheeks flushed, and he was silent still a moment. Then raising his eyes to his father's face, he answered, with a sudden, sweet smile, "No, papa: it is not for *your* sake I am sacrificing myself;" and then throwing his arms round his neck, he effectually stopped his mouth from further questioning, and with another, "Now I really must go," left the room.

Mr. Raymond never again asked him what had decided his course, content with having made his protest, and having a shrewd guess that loving tenderness towards himself was somehow at the bottom of it. He was only too well satisfied and intensely contented that his end was gained, and he did not see his boy's face outside his door, and never knew how much of the burden of sorrow lifted from his own shoulders had fallen upon the younger ones, which felt its weight with such double oppression.

The tutor that morning had, for once, felt it difficult to give his 'full attention to his one pupil, as the other still lingered absent. The door opened presently, and he came in. As he spoke his few words of apology for his delay, with the explanation, "But I was with papa," and then seated himself with his back to the window, instead of in his usual place, Mr. Maynard's mind was at rest. That

stillness of manner and settled look could only come from peace gained, at the expense of hope dead. He pulled his books round him, and began his work. What it was, the tutor did not know, and, just then, would not ask; but Osbert looked up after a little, saying, "Hubert, you are going it like twenty steam engines, and it isn't the day for Virgil; so I don't know what you are doing it for."

"You did this before breakfast," his brother answered, turning his dictionary in hot haste; "and I wasn't down."

"You may leave it, if you like, and come and join us here," Mr. Maynard said. "It is nearly time for your algebra."

"No, thank you, sir: I am all behind. I would rather try and get up."

And again his leaves flew over, and his pen hurried on as quickly. Then there was rapid learning, with his hands over his ears; anything to fix the thoughts that were ready to start and roam far, only to gather pain for their burden. But he was summoned presently for other work; and the rein once released, it was a struggle to keep his mind under control. Mr. Maynard was patient; and Hubert put force upon himself to steady his attention, till his cheeks were burning, his mind confused, and every answer given wrong.

"It is no good going on like this, Hubert. If you are not feeling well, say so, and you may stop."

"Well? I'm quite well; only I can't think straight."

"I am sure you don't look so, Hu.," Osbert said. "I never saw you look so funny."

"There's nothing the matter with me, 'Bert. I shall have to take to wearing a mask soon, if people won't let my unfortunate face alone. Let me take the thing away, Mr. Maynard, and do it by myself."

It was nearly an hour before he moved again; for their tutor had checked his brother's two or three intentions to speak to him, and himself had let him alone, seeing the efforts to work were only renewed at intervals. Presently

Osbert was sent away for the usual half-hour's run. He called his brother to join him ; but he said he was not quite ready, and Mr. Maynard, looking up at him some minutes after, saw that tears were slowly stealing down his cheeks, and dropping on the paper, while he brushed them away, and muttered his calculations to himself.

"Bring me that, and let me see how it is going," he said.

"I have not done, sir."

"Never mind : let me have it." Without so much as glancing at it, it was torn across, and thrown into the basket beneath the table. "There, that is the best place for that sort of thing just now, I think," he said, looking up at him kindly. "We'll say no more about lessons this morning."

"No : I must do them, Mr. Maynard. I wish you hadn't torn that. It was coming right : I know it was," he said. "It is the only thing I've got to do now ; for it is all up with me."

"Yes : I know it is ; at least, as you mean it. You must let me shake hands with you, Hubert. I congratulate you with all my heart."

"Congratulate me !" Hubert said, amazed, yet giving his hand. "Much you have to congratulate me for. If anyone has ever had to cut his own throat, I have had to."

"Still, I am glad for you ; for you have stood firm, and been true to yourself, and to what you must have found out one day was duty, if you had not now. What would your feeling be now if your decision had gone the other way ? If I know you right, a sorrow would have begun already, bringing more pain than the joy of your gratified wish could cover,—eh : don't you think so ?"

"Yes, sir : perhaps it might."

And the hand which had lain passive gave the answering squeeze to the tutor's. He went on : "You remember I told you, when you first broached the subject to me, that I believed there was one thing that would lead you to this. I am thankful to know I was right. Still, though I say so, I,

by no means, would have you think that I do not feel much for you."

His look said he did; and Hubert drew his hand from his grasp, and turned away, saying, "Don't, Mr. Maynard,—don't say you pity me, or look at me like that: I am sick of feeling sorry for myself. Only give me thumping hard lessons, and be sharp on me, if I do them badly. I want to forget myself, and all about it." He spoke in an excited despairing tone, coming back, and sitting down again, saying, "Oh, you can have no notion how horrible I feel! I don't know how people bear things; all I know is, I don't know how to. Here, where is that Virgil? There, hear whether I know it: do!"

"I don't care whether you know it or not. Understand me, my boy: I mean what I say. I don't wish you to do any more of this kind of work to-day: you shall read with me presently. But a night spent in your jacket is not the fit preparation for working your brain."

"Oh, Mr. Maynard: but, indeed, then, I only think of other things! How did you know I had had my jacket on all night?"

"By seeing you sound asleep in it this morning. What made you do such a thing?"

"I went to sleep ever so long, with my head on the table, and then I got into a state, thinking of things, and didn't think of undressing, and then I went off sound again, in uncle's room. Oh, please, do give me something to do!"

It was the tutor's habit never to answer a repeated request once refused, and Hubert's appeal was the last word spoken for some time. When Mr. Maynard looked round at him again, his face had taken its old set, and he was sitting quite still, with his head on his hand. The look of hopeless quiet,—more noticeable in one usually in a state of perpetual movement, or else absorbed in the occupation of the moment, touched and pained his companion.

"What are you waiting for, Hubert? Are you not going

to join your brother? He said he was going to the stables, to see what was the matter with one of the ponies: one of them has kicked your favourite white one."

"Oh, I say, how was that?" and he started up, but dropped back again, saying, "Oh, he'll tell me about it!"

"That is not going for your run."

"I didn't understand you meant me to;" and again he moved, turning listlessly towards the door.

"Come here, Hubert," Mr. Maynard said: "I don't want you to go, if you would rather not: it is a thing you can please yourself in. Would you rather stay here?"

"I don't mind: whichever you like."

"Come, nonsense: I can't have you talking in that meek way, as if you had no will of your own."

"I don't see much the use of having one: I fancy one would get along better without," Hubert said, with a miserable attempt at a laugh. "But if you don't mind, I would rather stay, as the time is more than half gone."

"You think there is no use in having a will of one's own, if one mayn't gratify it: is that it, Hubert? But isn't that something like a man who should despise bread because he is thirsty, and not hungry, at the time it is given him: he will know its worth when the other want is felt. And the ungratified will, though seeming now to you worse than useless, may be found to be the means of satisfying a higher desire."

"What do you mean, Mr. Maynard?" Hubert asked; always interested in his tutor's remarks, suggesting more than they told.

"I was thinking yesterday evening, as I was reading at prayers that account of Mary breaking the box of ointment, how well for us, sometimes, it would have been, if instead of hoarding some treasure we held—some cherished desire, which it was joy even to look at,—we had brought it, and offered it willingly while we still held it, instead of clinging to it madly—aye, sinning to retain it, till accident broke it,

and the treasure and the power to offer it were gone together. Mary was wiser, and took home with her, instead of her treasure, her highest desire satisfied, love shown to her Lord, a precious memory, and a blessing for all life."

He sat silent, looking sadly before him; and Hubert knew he had been speaking from a look into his own past. The question on his lips was interrupted and answered before it was spoken. Turning round upon him with one of his sudden movements, he took hold of his wrist, saying, "Hubert, your heart is sore now. The design you had cherished and felt to be the best possession you had, you think lost, and that you had been better without ever having held it. But not so: it is broken indeed, and for ever; but you yourself of your own will have destroyed it, to satisfy another desire, higher than the one broken. You have surely gained instead, what Mary did. I also once had, as you had, a design, cherished with a strength of which you can know nothing. I thought in those days that I too knew that desire to which you have sacrificed your will: whether I did at all, I sometimes doubt. At any rate, I would not offer my best for it; though with me, as with you, it was a question of sacrificing it or sinning. And I held it,—grasped it; and, when the opportunity for yielding it up was passed irretrievably, it fell from my hold, was dashed to pieces before my eyes. And what had I gained? A curse for all life, and beyond that—who knows?"

Hubert could not bear to see that wild look in his eyes, and he said gently, only thinking of recalling his thoughts to their usual train, "But, Mr. Maynard, I should have done, I am afraid, just the same,—kept to my own way, I mean, when I was not sure it was the right one, if—if I had not been stopped. But yet, even if I had, I know I should have been forgiven if I had been really sorry: to be sure, though, then I might have fallen from the mast, and been made a cripple for always."

"Aye," said the tutor, speaking again in his natural manner, and half smiling at the quietly settled probable fate, "it was better to break your alabaster box yourself, as a sacrifice to your Lord, feel His look of love your's, and hear his words, 'He hath wrought a good work.' I should say that that was worth the pain of having been the possessor of a will that might not be gratified, better than being without one altogether."

"Yes: I suppose it is," said Hubert, half smiling at his tutor's fancy; "but it is not right to compare my way of doing it with Mary's. I am quite sure she never once cried to have her box back again afterwards," he said, half to himself, as the tears gathered in his eyes.

"And that is just what I wanted to say to you," Mr. Maynard said, taking both his hands in his. "Don't you do so, either. Try and not think about what you have lost: think only of why you have lost it. You must be a man, and once having made up your mind never turn back and repent it. But I am quite sure you will not," he added, looking up at him, as the quiet look with which he met his eye spoke his steadfastness as plainly as his answer, "No, I never shall: that was what I was afraid of. But I am perfectly sure now I am right. I shall never repent; but you mustn't mind my being sorry, for I shall be that for always and always,—all my life long."

The door opened as he spoke, and Mr. Raymond came in. He moved very feebly, for his last attack of illness had been a sharp one, and had left him shaken; but he looked brighter than he had done for many a day. His son exclaimed at him, "How could you think of coming downstairs, papa, before lunch?" And as Mr. Maynard watched him start forward to meet him, draw him to his seat with the same eager manner as of old, and then ask what he wanted, that he had come so far to get, he wondered not a little at the self-command which could so instantly hide his own feelings; he wondered not at all at the rejoicing look, utterly un-

suspicious of the bitter grief the boy's affection concealed from him, with which Mr. Raymond looked across, saying, "Hu. has told you, I suppose, that we are not to lose our biggest trouble after all."

"He has let me understand he stays at home," he answered; while Hubert said, with a grim sort of smile, "It is a bad thing, papa, isn't it, to find oneself owned as a big trouble, which is safe to grow bigger;" a remark his father only answered by a laugh, and the words, "Willingly owned, dear son;" and then asked him to find what he had come to seek, the second volume of a borrowed book he wanted to return.

Hubert said it was to be found in the drawing-room, and went away in search of it a few moments before Osbert pushed eagerly in, crying, "Oh, here you are, papa! Is it true what Minnie says, that Hu. is not going to sea? She says she is sure he isn't, because she saw him when he came out of your room go and lean over the banisters a long time, instead of going downstairs."

"Minnie is sharp in her conclusions: what would she make of that?"

"But she was on the stairs above, and heard him say uncle Oswald's name over and over, and she was sure he was crying. Have you decided he is not to go?"

Mr. Raymond's face changed. "You may tell Minnie that spying her brother from the upper stairs was not a ladylike or sisterly action. Don't mention it again: whatever thought had grieved him, he thought himself alone when he was mourning it. However, as it is he has decided for himself, not I for him,—that could not be, as you know,—that he will stay at home, so you may have your wish after all." He looked not a little disturbed as he spoke; but Osbert's caper and shout of delight at his last words made his smile return, while the thought of any such demonstration repeated before Hubert just then, roused Mr. Maynard to say earnestly. "Allow me, Mr. Raymond:

would you mind, if that work is to be returned to-day, telling Hubert to take his pony and ride to Woodlands with it, and stay to lunch? I want him to do nothing more to-day."

Mr. Raymond looked up uneasily. "Is he not well?"

"He will be much better out riding than doing any more lessons to-day," was the answer, which, coming after the repetition of Minnie's story, made Mr. Raymond's answer a simple, "Very well."

The tutor was encouraged to add, as the boy's step was heard approaching, "And please be peremptory, or he will refuse."

Mr. Raymond took his advice, and found it needed, as Hubert begged and prayed to be allowed to stay at home. "I can't bear to go to that house: it is crowded with people, and I shall be kept there all the afternoon."

"Just the very best thing for you, dear boy: you are not looking as you should," Mr. Raymond said, his eyes opened now to see it. "Change your things: put on your blue, and you may take Black Witch if you like, as I hear your favourite is hurt."

"Please need I wear my blue things?"

"Yes. Why not?"

And as Hubert coloured, only saying, "I would rather not," he asked tenderly, "Is it because you wish to wear mourning? I thought you told me you did not care to do so. If so, of course, I am quite willing that you should; you have every right."

"Oh dear no, papa: I don't wish it! It makes no sort of difference that I can see."

"Hubert, you are exactly like your uncle in some things: that is just one of his speeches. Then why don't you want to wear your blue?"

"Only I don't want to."

"If you have no better reason than that, you can do as I wish you to. I like you to do me credit." Then noticing

the vexed look Hubert did not succeed in hiding, he asked, "Which is the horse you like best in the stables, Hu? Witch, is it not?"

"Oh, yes: a long way, except your's and Hector."

"Hector is Oswald's, and a great deal too big for you. Well, Witch is your own, then: take care of her for she is a valuable little creature. I shall like you to have her: it is pleasanter to have one's particular property in that line."

Hubert's warm thanks, and smile of intense pleasure, repaid him. It was a long time now, he thought, since he had seen it. His old friend would no longer have given the description of the boy's mouth, which had so amused O'Hara. The smiles no longer lay in waiting, they had been dismissed for many a day; and if one were wanted now, it was summoned from some distant hiding-place, and answered the call but slowly, bearing the marks of its unwillingness even when doing duty.

"Let me have a look at you before you start," he said. And a very pleasant sight he thought him, with his shapely head and shoulders, and close waving brown hair, as he stood again before him in the dark blue suit, which had been the subject of such pleasure and happy pride when put on first to show to Oswald, and always worn when going anywhere with him. Hubert would have liked to have thrown it away now, sooner than wear it. "I can't think why you don't like that dress, Hu.: you look particularly well in it."

Hubert just then felt perfectly indifferent as to what he looked like, disliking the prospect of his expedition; and the very touch and look of the soft blue cloth making him feel more miserable, hopeless, and alone. He went out, and mounted the pretty little horse, usually a great object of desire, and but rarely granted,—now even the pleasure of possession little heeded. He did not know that his father had followed him out, and was watching him, troubled to see the slow step with which he went down from the door; and more still the dejected look with which, for a few

moments, he stood by the horse before mounting, after the stable boy had left it, leaning his head against the saddle, as if wanting heart even to put his foot in the stirrup. The creature turned her head towards him, as if wondering what ailed him, that his usual greeting had not been given; and Hubert, meeting the look of the large intelligent eyes, moved, and threw his arm over her neck, the feeling of self-pity raised again by the dumb sympathy that seemed offered him. "Do you know you are mine now? You little beauty," he said, patting its head, "you will have to be wonderfully good to make up for all that you are meant to."

"Bring a bright face back with you," Mr. Raymond called, when he, at last, took his seat. And Hubert looked up startled, nodded to him, and rode away, glad that, at least, for a good twelve miles, his face might have leave to look as it liked. "Poor fellow: he cannot shake off his grief," his father said, as he turned and saw Mr. Maynard standing behind him. "And I fear it will be some time before he does: he droops sadly."

"It was a terrible shock," said the tutor. "And is a grievous loss to him."

"I am glad you suggested this ride. We must try what we can do to turn off his mind from brooding over the past."

Mr. Raymond knew as well as his companion did that the cause of his grief was quite as much in the present and the future; but he chose to attribute every sorrowful look, and every sign of changed spirits, to the one cause; and Mr. Maynard was not the one to contradict him. But knowing and admitting the truth himself, he was able to comfort and help when Mr. Raymond could not; and gained most grateful affection in return.

Hubert had thought himself incapable of enjoyment; but the pleasant afternoon, passed among kind people, who made much of him, and with companions of his own age, was enjoyed very thoroughly, in spite of the sudden rush of

recollection now and then. And it was with brightened face and feelings that he came home through a driving autumn wind and rain, glad to draw the plaid, that had been bundled round him, tight up about his neck ; and rejoicing in meeting the bustling rough air, and to feel the dash of the drops against his cheeks and hair. Wind and exercise sent him in looking more like himself again ; and with roused spirits to meet the comments, questionings, and exclamations from all at home, which there was no longer a chance of avoiding.

He was glad that the first encounter was Osbert, and alone, hoping as he did, to put a stop once and for ever, if he could, to the triumphing, which the first glance showed him his brother was enjoying.

The separation of feeling between the twin boys had continued steadily on the increase ; everything had tended to widen it, and anyone seeing them together now, would have judged that fully four years divided them. Try as Osbert might against it, he could not get over a half-respectful feeling towards the brother, who was Geraldine's friend, who was walked with by Mr. Maynard, and seemed able to find him a companion, whom Colonel Dennis treated with marked notice, and who now more than ever seemed removed from him, set apart, as it were, by the sacredness of a sorrow he never dared to touch : that mourning cloak and banded hat, and his station at Colonel Dennis' side, had left a most vivid and impressive memory on Osbert's mind.

Though any thought of attaining to such importance was not to be entertained, his jealous feeling naturally grew none the weaker ; and the hope that it might yet be gratified in the one only way in which it could be, had become proportionably strong. He had never ceased hoping that the stone he had first set moving, would only cease to roll at the point at which he had aimed it,—the overthrow of the chief cause, as he thought, of his brother's distinction above him. What could be more healing to the vanity and self-consequence wounded so long, than to see himself at

last occupying his brother's most coveted place, the summit of his hopes. The indulgence with which Hubert had of late been treated by both father and tutor, while to himself and his self-willed faults, they had been stricter and sterner than ever, made his feeling still more bitter; and he had thought with anger, that now to-day, again, seemingly without any reason, here was Hubert sent off to enjoy himself for a whole afternoon,—on a Monday, too,—an unheard-of day for an extra half-holiday; no thought of sending him with him: and mounted on the coveted pride of the stables. It was no wonder that the thought of showing his triumph, at last, was sweet to him.

Hubert was unwrapping himself from his soaked covering as Osbert came by a side door into the hall, dripping with wet. "You are not so fortunate as I am, 'Bert.; this plaid, Lady Cornelia swaddled me up in, has kept me dry, all but head and knees."

His brother answered with an unpleasant laugh. "A thing for a landsman to take care about; but it is just as well to get accustomed to what is in store for one, so I am wet to the skin." Hubert made no answer, though the blood rushed to his face; only wondering what would come next.

"So you have been obliged to give in after all, papa says, and stay at home? I knew you would: you see I was quite right when I told you I should go to sea."

Hubert looked at him hard, a minute, with a feeling rising in his heart towards him, such as Esau might have had when the mess of pottage was eaten, and he first took thought of his brother as a supplanter in his birthright. Osbert, too, had used the epithet which touched him to the quick: he would not show that; but his face darkened.

"Look here, Osbert," he said, speaking hotly, and unconsciously using the elder-brother tone, so galling to his twin brother; "don't you go talking of what you know nothing. There has been no giving in in the matter: what I have done, I have done because I chose to."

"Oh, I daresay ! I do know something about it, and I know papa must have made you, or why should you have changed ?"

It was very bitter to Hubert to have to speak of it at all, and anger did not make it easier ; while the mingled desire to maintain the dignity of the independence of his action, and to keep to truth, made it difficult to chose his words. He said sharply what he meant to be conclusive. "I have changed because I chose to change ; and that is all the *why* you will ever know about it." With a feeling that the anger raised in his heart, and the unbrotherly tone of his speech, were unclean touches laid upon his pure offering, he turned away, pained with himself : obedience in one great thing brought no indulgence for disobedience in lesser.

Osbert's wish however was by no means satisfied. "Whether you like to tell me or not," he said, "I know as well as you do now, that it is better to be second best and get what one wants, than have all the fun of being pet for two years and then have to stay and go on with it when one doesn't want to. Who will be the one to have his own way now ? for I tell you *I* have quite decided to go to sea, and there will be no one to force *me* to change."

Hubert was beside himself, so much of truth lay among the taunting words. He turned round upon his brother : "You think you want to go to sea, do you ? All you want is to get away from being obliged to obey Papa and Mr. Maynard and to have your own way ;—much you know about the life before you if you think you will be let to have your own way on board ship. I was reading an account in the *Times* of a court-martial, where a lieutenant was dismissed the service for having left his ship without leave ; take care you are not sent back on Papa's hands like that : and as to *your* deciding anything in the matter, Papa has decided, whether you like it or no, that he will send you. He told me that the strict discipline will be the best thing for you."

Osbert stood staring at him ; his triumphing was most

effectually silenced, and he turned off muttering that he should do as he liked about it, but making up his mind never to try taunting Hubert again on that subject.

As to Hubert, he was sorry, as soon as the words were out of his mouth, for what he had said. He knew nothing vexed his brother as did the knowledge that he and his doings were spoken of by their father to himself. He was up the stairs after him the next minute, and coming up with him just as he was shutting his door caught him round the neck. "'Bert I am sorry I spoke like that to you : but look here, don't you bother about this business, there's a good fellow, and I hope you'll enjoy yourself when you go."

So rare an event as an apology was an instant cure to wounded pride, and Osbert was restored to good humour in a minute. "Then you are not glad you are not going yourself?" he asked.

"I didn't come to tell you what I was glad about, but what I was sorry about ;" and, with a slap on the shoulder in sign of restored friendliness, he left him with the hope he soon found to be well founded,—that he should not have to fear any more of his unpleasantly barbed arrows.

Osbert himself studied his brother as a continual puzzle, but it was one to which he had no clue, and he changed his opinion as to the reason of his choice quite as many times as he thought about it, but he never ventured again on questioning him. He did ask his father, but his answer left him quite as much in the dark as he was before, and he was obliged to rest content with the knowledge that he might try on the empty shoes, though ignorant of the cause that had put them off.

The school-room tea was Hubert's next trial, and it was not a small one ; but he was more ready with gentle answers when the questionings and comments sprang only from wondering curiosity, mixed with a good share of rejoicing ; and great was both wondering and rejoicing which the

news that they were not to lose him had caused. They did not yet know that Osbert was to take his place. Question after question: "But what has made you,—don't you think you would like being a captain,—are you afraid of being drowned,—doesn't Papa like you to go?" fell thick upon him; answered at first with good natured joking rejoinders. But when Minnie's penetration carried her farther: "What will uncle say,—won't he be very sorry? I wonder you can bear not to go to him after all;" and Godfrey chimed in with, "He'll be as savage as a bear I know. Have you told him yet?" Hubert's changing colour, short replies, and hurried attack upon his cup, warned Miss Sturt to interfere. "If you tease Hubert so with your questions, Minnie, we shall hear the old name of Ina Inquisitive again; and Godfrey, if you speak rudely of your uncle, Hubert will be the one to be savage."

"Well but really Hu., won't you just tell me why you aren't going?"

"No, Minnie I won't, so you had better shut up, and find something more entertaining to talk about." He spoke good temperedly; but they saw he meant it, and the subject was dropped.

That night when Hubert was shut up in his room Mr. Maynard followed him, and coming to the table where he was sitting with his book open before him, said, as he laid his hand on it and closed it over the fingers laid in it, "I can't have any more of this now, Hubert. You must get into bed when you come up stairs, and be down punctually in the morning: this is not the time for reading."

Hubert was taken by surprise, for his actions had grown to be very independent lately, and he answered with a mixture of feelings in his voice: "If you come in here, to my private quarters, prying after me, Mr. Maynard, my only way will be to lock my door, that is all."

"That would not avail you much, I think: a few words to your father would settle the matter, and hardly, perhaps,

quite so agreeably to you. No : you must be a good boy, and do as I tell you."

The tutor's last thought had been to vex him ; but his words and tone brought a painful reminder of the unchanged authority he was now to continue under. He knew it was no good to dispute it, and his father's fondness had never led him to relax the firm hand with which he always bent him to his own or the tutor's will : there was never the faintest question as to who should yield. He was quiet a few minutes ; then said, without turning his head, "Very well. But it is not the slightest use getting into bed : I shan't go to sleep,—I never can."

"Oh, yes, you will. I have been very lenient with you about it lately ; but your mind is at rest now, and you must go back to proper habits. Sleep will soon come early again, only you must be ready for it, and not excite your brain by reading just before you lie down."

"Excite my brain," repeated the boy, half-inclined to laugh ; then added, eagerly, "But you won't stop me altogether? Oh, don't make me more disobedient to uncle than I must be : he told me to. Oh, please let me !"

"Don't get into despair. I don't want to stop you reading your verses, or your chapter, of course ; but it must be nothing else. I want to see you looking again more as you used to look."

Hubert shook his head, pushing away the book he had been reading ; and the heavy sigh with which he drew his Bible towards him went to the tutor's heart.

"Does that make you feel happier; do you think?" he asked, touching the book.

"I don't know : I suppose it does. Yes : I know it does, in some ways ; but you see, Mr. Maynard, happy may mean so many different things."

"How so? I don't know that I do see it."

"Don't you remember, when uncle was coming home last, how you said laughing over one's happiness was like

bubbles running up in a glass of champagne? That is the sort of happiness I like. There are other sorts, of course, just as there are other sorts of wine, and better too than champagne, only I always like the bubbling best."

"Aye; but then, Hubert, if the other wines want the sparkle, they are not spoilt at once by the loss of it."

Hubert smiled sadly. "Yes: that is true," he said, opening his book. "I suppose the best sort of happiness is, after all, just what one doesn't laugh over; and I shall remember what other happinesses there are some time again, but just now I can only think of what I have lost." And, to his companion's surprise and distress, as his voice died away in a whisper he dropped his face in his hands, and with his old despairing question, "Oh, what shall I do!" began crying bitterly.

"Poor boy! Hubert, I didn't mean to make you do this."

"It isn't you," he said between his sobs: "I can't help it, and I hadn't meant you to see me so babyish."

But call his tears what he might they were not easy to stop, and the tutor stood by him watching him pitifully, saying, "Never mind: you are upset to-day," glancing over a paper, meanwhile, that he took from between the leaves of the open Bible. Bishop Hooper's verses were copied upon it; and though he half smiled as he laid it back again, he put his hand on the boy's shoulder and pressed the brown head against him. "This is hardly the sea you had looked forward to launching on," he said; while Hubert, struggling with his tears, and ashamed to think his comparison of himself with the martyr had been understood, said low, "You must think I am making all this out a worse trouble than you can think it is; but indeed, Mr. Maynard, it is just that I have lost everything in the world I cared or hoped most for, and what I shall do with myself I don't know. I just feel as if I couldn't bear it sometimes."

"The other day you compared what you knew was

coming upon you now to a second burial, didn't you?" Hubert's head gave token of assent. "Don't you think, then, that in this you may take the same consolation as was offered to you all by that grave,—the thought of the sure resurrection of what you had laid there?"

"The resurrection of it?" and Hubert looked up surprised.

"Aye, thus:—You don't look forward to meeting, in the one case, the frail body that you loved, but the glorious perfected form springing from the perishing seed of life, where you laid it, sown in weakness to be raised in power; when you meet him so raised, I am quite as sure you will meet with what you have to-day laid from you dead; not as you have sown it—a hope of earthly happiness never to be fulfilled,—but as—how shall I say?—why as the righteous in the parable at the right hand of the King met their forgotten works, unrecognisable to themselves, but risen witnesses of their love to Himself; those words, "Ye did it unto Me," having given the spiritual body to those common earthly deeds. Will it not comfort you to think of so recognising your's at that day?"

"But it doesn't seem anything rightly like that, to be so awfully sorry about it all the while," sobbed Hubert, wiping his eyes. "It just rushes upon me what has happened: that it has all gone. Oh, you have no notion how I longed after it! And I cannot feel rightly about giving it up. And then there is uncle. If I only knew what he would say! What shall I do if he is angry with me?"

"Why, bear it. But I don't see why you should expect that he, of all people, will be. He will know you have done this only because you know it right to do it. He can have no ground for anger. Anyway, even if he thought he had, his anger can be of very little moment compared with the anger of God, which disobedience would have brought, and the loss of that highest hope you look to see realized. Disobedience would have at once destroyed your right to

hold that hope longer : to see Christ, and to be like Him. It is only the pure in heart who shall see God. Be thankful, above all else, that you have not sinned away that."

"But, Mr. Maynard, you always put it backwards," said Hubert, raising his head. "It is those who are sure of seeing Him, and being like Him, who purify themselves. That is what St. John says. I'm sure nothing but the thought of Him could make one try to do it. At least, when it costs as much as it does sometimes."

"But the statement Christ makes is unmistakable. Where can the hope be for those whose hearts are not pure, if it is only the pure in heart who shall see God?"

"Why, He was speaking there of the pureness He makes. We don't make ourselves fit to see God by our obedience. I am afraid mine would not be much worth. But when we are hoping to see Him it does make us try after it."

He dropped his head down again, in no humour for talking, and the tutor said no more, but the boy's words remained with him.

"Come," he said, after a little, stroking his hair tenderly. "Shall we see what your verses are for to-night? And then you must get into bed, and not be sitting thinking any more."

Hubert would much rather have read them by himself. It seemed uncomfortably strange to think of having Mr. Maynard's eye upon them at the same time as his own ; but he could not rebuff his kindness, and moved from his chair, saying, "Will you sit down, then." And kneeling at his side, opened the little book.

"Your uncle has certainly spared no pains in the writing of this. It is as clear as printing."

"No : you see he made it plain, because of its having to be used"——

The remembrance of when it was to have been used stopped the rest of the sentence ; and he turned the leaves hurriedly, finding the place. But his eyes were too blinded to see the words ; and the tutor read them aloud, slowly

and impressively. He had noticed what they were in the morning ; and for that reason had made his proposal.

"The Lord God of recompense will surely requite." Then came the command, and the warning. "With good will doing service, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord." "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward ; for ye serve the Lord Christ : but he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done." The extract was, "Rest assured that an increase in our obedience will always be accompanied with an increase of true happiness."

He read them a second time ; and then drawing Hubert close to him, said, "Come now, a sailor knows that even if the sea he has to sail over does look dark and stormy, a sure promise of safe entry into port would make the voyage a cheery one ; so you won't forget the good will and heartiness of your service in your sorrow, will you ?"

"I'll try not. Thank you, Mr. Maynard. I don't know what makes you so excessively kind. I don't know what I should do without you : you are the only one left, now."

The tutor thought of the words he had read in the morning ; but he only said, drawing the boy a little closer as he spoke, "Oh, you have your father still."

"Yes : but I have to pretend to be happy when I am with him. Whatever you do, you won't let him know how bad I feel : he thinks it is the sort of thing he can cure by giving me Witch."

"No : you may trust me to say nothing. And believe me, too, when I say, that anything I can do for you to make this change easier to you, that I will do. Look upon me not as a tutor only, but friend, if you will." And to Hubert's exceeding surprise, he bent and kissed his forehead.

He looked up at him with a smile, saying, "Mr. Maynard, do you remember telling me once I was a baby for kissing papa ?" And he returned the embrace heartily.

"Ah, I have grown more tender hearted since those days," he said, patting his shoulder. "Besides that, I have love myself now to show. Now, at once into bed, and punctually down to-morrow: the first half your friend's advice, the last your tutor's." And smiling back at him he left him.

He carried away with him the blotted paper of *reasons*, which he had recognised, as it lay crumpled up in the corner of the table, and pocketed it unknown to its writer. The copy of verses went with it. He had drawn them from the Bible with the only excuse, "I should like it, if I may have it."

It was with a quiet, though very grave face, that as soon as he was alone again, Hubert took his watch from his pocket, unfastened it from the chain,—which, in its cable form, with its dropping golden anchor for the guard through the button hole, spoke so plainly of the giver, and the reason of the gift,—and opened its outer case. He looked once again at the words engraved within, and as he laid it in the watch box, said to himself, "Well, if the reason that I may keep it is gone, the best one for having had it, is not: nothing can take that away." He folded it in paper, sealed it, wrote on it the name Ch. Donne, and the date of the day, and then took it into Oswald's room, where he put it in the table drawer, to lie unused, among a miscellaneous collection of articles which were always raked into confusion at the end of each visit home. In his own pocket its place was filled by an old silver watch of Maxwell's, that never kept time; but it allowed the use still of the chain, and prevented questions on its absence.

He had thought at first to have the sailor-like sign of his lost hope removed from the other end and replaced by a bar; but before he could make up his mind to it, Mr. Prescott preached one day on the words, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast," and after that he was well content to leave it with a fresh meaning attached to it.

CHAPTER XXII.

DIVIDED.

“The face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice I once have known
Still speak to me.”

THE days went by after that with the uneventful stillness that made them pass quickly, the quiet routine leaving no mark to tell their flight. Only the girls' constant letters brought stray gleams of brightness to Hubert. He could find none elsewhere. Geraldine's tone of hearty affection warmed his heart ; and her page of rejoicings, over the news that she should always find him at home when their holidays came round, nearly made him glad himself for a few moments.

For the next two weeks Osbert was remarkably quiet and subdued, constantly working with their tutor over the dull ground of rudimentary learning, till he began secretly to wish that Hubert were the one to go. But the day was near. And one morning, as they were leaving the breakfast-room, their father said, suddenly, “Hu., if you would like the trip to town with me, I shall have to take Osbert on Wednesday, and you may come. I should like you with me, if you fancy it.”

Hubert saw by his way of asking him that he thought it

likely he would refuse, and he gave his answer decidedly. "No, thank you : I would very much rather stay at home." And nothing more was said about it.

On the day named, the twin brothers said their good-bye, one quite as solemn over it as the other, a great deal of loving feeling rising in their hearts at that last minute, and unexpected pain at the parting. In Osbert's mind, as his arm clasped his brother's neck, there was mingled with the pain no small feeling of compunction for the part he had acted towards him. He did not, indeed, know how much his share had been in bringing about this end,—that they now stood as they did ; but he knew he had wished it, and plotted for it ; and the motive that had caused the wish was not pleasant to remember just then, with his brother's cheek against his.

When the carriage was out of sight, Hubert told them to saddle his horse, and went away by himself, only returning when the sun had long been down. His father's absence for a while he felt a great relief ; and during the three weeks that it lasted, he gave himself a holiday to look as he felt, and fell into habits of silence, and unchecked gravity, which too easily became fixed to be quickly broken.

Mr. Maynard had no cause to complain of his pupil ; for though Mr. Raymond had said he might have the time of his absence for himself, he made no use of the grant of leisure : better content to have the days filled with the settled employment which gave him the only companionship left him, and the pleasure of feeling his tutor's interest continually exercised about him ; that never ceased, nor did his silent kindness change.

He was surprised, now that he had lost him, to find how he missed his brother at every turn. Godfrey was too young to be a substitute ; though, to the little boy's great delight, he was now promoted to Osbert's seat in the library, at the tutor's side. There were no boys of his own age in any of the houses in their near neighbourhood, and the village

club had lost its attraction ; not only because autumn weather made games uninviting, but it was Osbert who had been received intimately among their companions, and Hubert felt that, though he was as friendly with them as ever, they were shy of him alone, and his association with them was entirely confined to their games.

Mr. Maynard drove him out daily, to find fresh air, and exercise, and outdoor amusement ; the first two easier to discover than the last. The Grange, with its shuttered windows, was not more closed to him than it seemed to him all happiness was. He found enjoyment only on his horse's back, and in giving his little brother a long ride under his guardianship. He would have been much disturbed if he had thought his efforts at following his tutor's old advice, as to manliness, and concealing his feelings, had proved so little successful ; but the melancholy, worked by the double grief, was more than he could hide, for there was no fresh joy to spring to lighten either. His father's return, and the rejoicing with which he greeted him, telling him in plain words how deep was his thankfulness that he was the one to come to meet him, roused a momentary gratification ; but it was no cure to his sorrow to realize what it was for which he had exchanged his happiness. His efforts, however, after cheerfulness, were renewed with greater vigour with the fresh presence in the house, and were so far successful that his father only thought him quieter, and judged him growing contented, and fond of study, and warned his tutor against overworking him. How far distant from contentment he was, his pillow could too often have told. He had little chance of yielding to his sorrow in the day-time : Mr. Raymond kept him with himself constantly.

In the middle of November's dullest days a long letter came to him from his uncle, in answer to the one telling of the death of O'Hara. It was full of the warmest, tenderest sympathy, and so much fellow-feeling with his

grief for the lost friend, that a glow of pleasure returned at each touch of the letter in his pocket. The same post brought the first sheet from the *Britannia*, which Osbert had found industry sufficient to fill for him. He was not clever at letter-writing, and told little enough of all that Hubert wanted to know; but he was evidently quite happy, only indulging in a few growls at one or two of the regulations. And a report which Mr. Raymond received at the same time from one of the officers on board, a friend of Oswald's, gave a satisfactory account of his conduct. Mr. Maynard was thankful, as he watched Hubert's face over his one letter, that there had been a companion to it for him that morning, which he saw taken out and read again, when the other was pocketed with a heavy sigh.

"Well, what does uncle say about it all?" his father asked, as he passed behind him. "He has not vouchsafed an answer to my letter. Is he very much put out at his change of follower? I fear poor 'Bert won't get quite so much help from him as you would have had."

His father's tone, as if what his brother felt about the matter were a question of perfect indifference to him, irritated Hubert doubly at that moment. He drew his shoulder away from his hand, and stood up, saying, "You forget, papa, the length of time a letter takes to reach him now. This is an answer to one I wrote him nearly a month before you did."

A look at him was enough to remind his father what the subject of the letter must be. "My dear child, pardon me: I *was* forgetting. I am glad that has come for you: I am sure his sympathy will be such as to comfort you. Of course he cannot long have received my letter."

At the words Hubert's hand was drawn sharply from his pocket, where his fingers had been feeling over the crisp foreign paper, lovingly enjoying even the touch of it, for the sake of the words upon it. He looked up at his father with a face of sudden, pained distress. If that letter which

he had seen closed and posted, and in which he had refused to send a line from himself, had already been read, could it be that the words he had been lingering over with such joy, expressed any longer the writer's feeling towards him? With that letter in his desk, or more likely torn into shreds and flung overboard, "what is he feeling about me now?"

"Hubert, what ails you?" his father asked, quite as much startled by the boy's look as Hubert had been by his own thoughts.

"Nothing, thank you," he answered. Then turning round, and stumbling over his words in nervous haste, he asked, "Papa, you say you don't think uncle will help 'Bert as he would have helped me. I have wanted so long to know, what are you going to do about the Moor Farm? Please give him back all he has given me from it: I can't bear to think of having had it used for me. I should feel like a cheat if it weren't; for it was given me, I know, because—because I belonged to him then; at least, I mean, he cared for me then as if I were his." The last words came out with a short breath very like a sob; but he quieted himself, and asked again, "What will you do about it?"

In return his father asked, in much astonishment, "How do you know anything of this?" while Mr. Maynard finished his coffee and left the room.

"Uncle told me. I don't know anything particular about it, only he said he wanted to help me till I was Lieutenant: please pay him back."

"You are talking foolishly, Hubert: Oswald had no business to speak of such a matter to you at all. Don't trouble yourself about what does not concern you: he will have his money all right some day. He has been most kind and generous, but he was foolish in taking your profession as fixed, in making the arrangement. I told him he would very likely find himself mistaken, as he knows by now he was; but it was as your uncle he wished to help

you,—a tie stronger, surely, than any possible likeness of profession in the future.”

“Not to him and me, papa : it was that more than anything that made—Do please pay him back : I’ll go without anything. I’ll give up Witch ; only I can’t bear the feeling of his being swindled. I know he would never have promised it if he had known this.”

Mr. Raymond looked displeased for a moment, and then laughing and twisting his finger into the hair above Hubert’s ear, said, “Come, come Hu. : if uncle thinks I am swindling him, he can tell me so himself, when he writes the letter of abuse I expect next mail for my keeping possession still of my own most choice bit of property, instead of having sent it to his charge.”

Hubert jerked away his head, in no humour to stand joking,—least of all on that subject,—and opened his lips to renew his pleading.

“No : no more, Hu. You must not trouble yourself about this : it is a matter between my brother and myself. He will learn, I suppose, some day to keep his thoughts to himself.” Hubert after that could say no more, and could he have read the letter which went to his uncle some mails later, he would have bitterly regretted that he had said so much.

Weeks passed away, and the Christmas holidays began to be talked of eagerly ; and presently the church bells were ringing in the Christmas eve, and the house was filled with other voices and laughter than the children’s. The old days seemed to have come back again with the four who brought back fresh life to it ; and Hubert found happiness enough at Geraldine’s side to give him courage to bear, and spirit to answer, Maxwell’s raillery on his changeableness and appreciation of home ease, and to hear with patience and composure Osbert’s talk and stories,—as trying for a day or two as the first sight of his cadet’s uniform had been.

May’s affection saw in a moment what pain her first merry speech to him gave, and never repeated anything like it,

confiding to Geraldine that she was sure Hu. was sorry now that he had made the choice he had. Geraldine had seen at once, from the minute of his first clinging greeting, that there was something wrong with him,—he was so entirely altered in ways, manner, and look; but what it was she could not come to any opinion about. The next morning, at the time of the bringing in of the letters, she thought she could partly guess.

Maxwell had seized upon the bag, and, after satisfying his father, was teasing everyone in turn on the possible letters he had discovered at the bottom of it; till at last a thick double-stamped one was announced for Hubert. He had been listening to scraps from Mr. Raymond's St. Petersburg sheets, and not attending to the laughter and exclamations, and at once believing his brother's words, he started forward, crimson with excitement, crying, "Oh, why didn't you give it to me before?" When the children's laughter showed him his mistake, he sat down again quickly, without speaking, and turned so white that his brother exclaimed, "Why, Hu., one would think my idea of a letter for you was as alarming as the sight of a ghost. What do you look like that for?" While May, at the same minute, asked, "When did you hear from him last, Hu.? It is an age since we had any news of him."

"It is a month and two weeks and a half," said Hubert, speaking low, and bending down to feed Geraldine's spaniel.

The precision of the answer, and the heavy short sigh, was not lost upon her, as she sat at his side.

"Ah, he doesn't think such a recreant worth wasting powder and shot upon," said Maxwell. "You will go with him henceforth as Hubert the renegade. Are you coming to join me instead?"

"I wanted to ask you, Maxwell," Mr. Maynard's voice interrupted, "is it true what Mr. Duff told us,—that your friend, Mr. Collingwood, was one chiefly concerned in that last row at Sandhurst?"

Maxwell exclaimed indignantly ; and in the discussion that followed, Hubert was forgotten.

As he lingered with Geraldine in the churchyard after the morning service, she said to him, "You won't mind my asking you : will you, Hu. ? You are not unhappy about Mr. Raymond's not writing to you : are you ?"

"I don't understand it," he answered, sadly. "But it can't be helped."

She was pained at his tone. "But, Hu., there are so many things which may have kept him from writing. You don't think he is displeased with you ? That would be dreadful."

"I don't know what I think. I only know I feel wretched about waiting."

It was true that he did : every day added to his growing anxiety. His father had noticed the long blank in the usually brisk correspondence, but had made no remark ; and Mr. Maynard tried consolation, but without effect, and advised Hubert repeatedly to write and explain for himself the reasons for his decision, venturing privately to doubt the correctness of those given in Mr. Raymond's writing. But Hubert shrank exceedingly from saying more about it, wearied as he was of the subject. "When uncle writes, as he is sure to do, he will ask questions, and then I can answer them : that will be time enough. I can't go writing about it all : I don't know what to say. And after all that he said to me so often, he will only think any reasons that I tell him nonsense." His anxiety told upon him as he went about, ignorant yet what judgment had been passed upon him on the other side of the Atlantic, and what feelings were now held towards him in that one heart, so far away, which yet he felt his centre in the world, the one which, if still unchanged, all else might change round him, and happiness yet be his. Even the separation for life, now inevitable, could be endured, if love held them bound, as of old. The refilled house brightened

him greatly; and his father and tutor congratulated each other on the change companionship worked in him. The one thing which no outward influence could lighten was the continual haunting fear at sight of the morning and evening post bag. Each day it was the same,—an eager watching, a hurried beating of his heart as the key was turned in the lock of the bag, the quick discovery that there was nothing for him, and the dropping back of expectation, doomed still to waiting.

The few holiday weeks were very quickly gone, and soon the last of the three sets of travellers had left the pleasant home for their working places abroad; Mr. Raymond, to his son's surprise exerting himself so far as to conduct the two girls in person, and Hubert stood alone again at the open door, in the biting January wind, clenching his hands, as his habit was, doing what he said he hated doing,—pitying himself, and fighting to keep down the bitter tears which his fourteen years made him despise; but yet no less difficult to combat.

Mr. Maynard's hand was on his shoulder, and his words answering his thought, roused him from his fit of misery. "Your turn will come some day, my boy; it is rather dreary work, is it not, to be shut up with only an old dull fellow like me to keep you company; you should have done as your father asked you, and gone with him yesterday?"

"I couldn't, Mr. Maynard," he said, turning round, "and what would you have done without me? No, we'll keep each other alive: I am quite sure my dulness is a match for yours."

Mr. Maynard saw why he could not go, by the small key swinging in his fingers, and his restless look at the hall clock.

"I wouldn't wait about in the wind any more," the tutor said. You won't make it come the quicker: it is nearly dark. Come into the library: it is warm there. You have not

finished your book, "The Ocean World," have you? You know the box for Mudie's goes the day after to-morrow: come and read me some of it."

He was tempted in by the fireside, and the book, doubled in interest by his companion's pleasant talk over it, drove other thoughts out of his head; till he was startled by Foster's entrance with the object of his hopes and fears. Mr. Maynard, though never now personally interested in its contents, had grown by this time to feel about it much as the boy himself did, and watched his movements with nearly as much anxious eagerness as that which caused Hubert's hands to tremble over their work. The sudden change in his face, made him exclaim gladly, "At last! I had hoped as much, for I saw the mails were in."

The blue marked envelope was indeed there, but on turning it over, the address was seen: "Newton J. Raymond, Esq." Hubert flung it upon the table and turned in silence to his chair. Foster carried it with the other letters similarly addressed, to the study, and Mr. Maynard sat down to re-direct two for their absent owners. "Hubert," he said, when he had finished, "I have a great mind to risk opening that letter, and to give you yours out of it."

"No, no, don't think of it, sir: nothing would displease papa so much. Perhaps after all there isn't one for me in it. Oh, no, I must wait: only I am glad Foster has carried it off, or my fingers would be hardly off it. I had made *so* sure he would write straight to me."

His tutor pitied him greatly; but there was nothing for it but waiting, as he said, and to that he had to resign himself with a weary heart as best he might. He thought as he went up to bed that night, with the vision of that letter ready to follow him in his dreams, that uncle's old teaching of the yoke laid on the servants of Christ, with Mr. Cox's comment on its purpose,—to teach ready submission at last to the hand that ruled, was coming to be well understood by him. What long lessons his impatience

had been learning ; still, with what a deep, quiet joy, he could look back upon the past year and a half, and know from what he saw there that his choice of that service and its yoke had been no pretence. There were plenty of mistakes, plenty of failures, and plenty of self-will ; but plainly to be seen by deeds, not words, was the one true purpose of obedience for love's sake. Often had he found the training hard to bear, as he was doing now ; but he knew, and had learned to believe, that beyond the words, "Take my yoke," came those, "I will give you rest." The joy he felt always in the knowledge that his Saviour's promises were for him, was worth any pain, bitter though it might be, that proved he was keeping his part in the Saviour's covenant with him.

Mr. Raymond had not been five minutes in the house next day when his brother's letter was thrust at him, and Hubert was saying, as he thought quietly, "Please don't say you are too tired just to open this, papa, and give me mine out of it."

"From your uncle?" said his father, turning it over. "And did not you have one? That is quite a new thing: I am generally the one to wait while you open your's."

"Well, please, papa, don't keep me waiting any longer: it has been here since yesterday."

"It is a pity you didn't open it yourself, my boy," he said, driving Hubert frantic as he felt in his pocket after his penknife and prepared to cut the envelope.

"I didn't think you would have liked me to. Papa, why don't you tear it?"

"And have the rough bits wearing off into my pocket all the time it stays in it. You may always open your uncle's letters if you think one for you is inside: I can trust the safety of his confidences to me. There, there is your treasure,—not a very fat one."

Hubert seized upon it and was out of the room before his father knew he had moved, and away into the Park at

headlong speed, determined to find a safer solitude than even his own room, where he might learn at last whether comforting or sorrow had travelled so far, and tarried so long, to meet him. The short winter afternoon was already showing signs of its near ending, the yellow glow was fading in the western sky, and clouds rolling up quickly before a strong north-westerly wind, darkened still more the coming gloom ; but Hubert thought nothing of cold or threatening rain : there was light enough left to read by, and that satisfied his every need just then. He never stopped his run till he reached the two thorn trees with the stump between them, many a time his seat, and there he opened and read his letter.

“DEAR HUBERT,—You will no doubt be expecting some reply from me to your father’s communication in his letter received by me some weeks ago. There is not much for me to say on the subject of it. When he says that you have given up the thought of the navy as your profession, there is no need to tell you the decision causes me the most unmixed astonishment, after your repeated assurances that the contrary was your fixed intention. The disagreement between your purpose and your words accounts, however, entirely for the looks and conduct which were a continual source of wonder to me during my last stay at home, though nothing can ever account to me for the motives which can have led you to think the deception worth stooping to. All I can attribute it to is a lack of moral courage which I had never suspected in you, and that you felt it was easier to keep up the pretence to the last and then let me be told my mistake in writing by your father, than to face my expressed surprise and disappointment. I little dreamed, truly, that all would come to an end between us in such a way as this ; however, it is done for life, and there is no use in writing about it. Your father tells me you are happy, and a continual source of happiness to himself, and that Mr. Maynard reports you making great progress with him. I am glad to hear it, and

hope it may so continue with you, and that in whatever way of life you may now mean to pursue you may prosper.

“Your’s affectionately,

“OSWALD ARCHIBALD RAYMOND.”

Three or four times the words had been read through, and then the darkness came across them and they could be seen no more. The wind had increased in strength and keenness, the dead leaves flying in circling eddies; the clouds gathered thickly, and the rain fell in steady, soaking, slanting lines; but Hubert sat still, his elbows on his knees and his hands hanging down between them, clasped over the sheet of paper. He thought nothing of the wind and rain, though the drops were falling thickly from his hat, and his indoor dress was no protection against the biting gusts; but sat on as though stunned, staring before him, his heart beating like a hammer. It was the sharp aching of his hands and feet which roused him at last, and when he tried to move he felt stiffened, and his head swam as he collected his thoughts.

What should he do? He would go home: but it was easier to purpose than to do. The darkness was unlightened by one gleam, and except the stems of the trees near which he stood he could see nothing. Putting his back to them, he went forward slowly, stumbling over the uneven ground, going with a splash into what he had forgotten,—the piece of bog at the bottom, with its growth of rushes; then on again, to find himself brought up with a shock against the trunk of a big tree. The blow was hard enough to give him a good deal of pain, and confuse him still more than he was already; and he went on blindly, perished with cold, and disgusted at the idea, which he began to realize, that he had lost his way in their own park. How long he wandered about he had no thought; but it was with a great sense of relief that he presently saw, far away in front of him, lights from a cottage window. There was nothing between him and it, and he made for it straight, knowing, as he drew

nearer, by the white garden palings, that he was close to the bailiff's snug home. A path, plain enough for him to keep securely even in such darkness, led off to the broad road; but when he reached the gate, and looked again towards the bright window, he felt a desire to look into the warmth and light within, and he went on up the garden path.

Mr. Cox was sitting at the table drawn near to a blazing fire, busy at his evening work, account and manuscript books lying round him, while his tea-tray waited his attention; and the kettle was sending out clouds of steam. The sight to the weary, bruised, shivering boy was too tempting to be resisted. The door was never locked; and Hubert was standing next minute, to the great astonishment of the occupant of the sitting-room, hesitating about putting his muddy boots upon the red carpet.

"I am nearly too dirty to come in, Mr. Cox; but may I have a warm?"

"Dear me, Master Hubert: you look as if you wanted it! Where have you been?" And the arm-chair was pushed in front of the fire, and the boy seated in it before more was said.

"It seems a ridiculous thing to do: doesn't it?" he said, when he had told the reason of his being there. "To lose oneself in the park. But it is as dark as pitch."

He held his blue hands to the flame; and the bailiff said, "But how came you out such a night? You are looking ill."

"I didn't see it was getting so black," Hubert answered, holding his head. "I have given myself such a blow against a tree. If you don't mind, Mr. Cox, I'll lie down on the floor a few minutes. I feel so odd."

He put himself on his back, giddy and white; and Mr. Cox, frightened at his look, brought a cushion for his head. "Why, what is the matter with you?" he said, lifting the wet hair from his temples. "Yes: you have cut your

forehead. There, lie still a bit, and I'll get you some hot tea. You are perished with cold, poor lad." He bustled about, arranging for himself his batchelor meal, filling the tea-pot, and going off after a second cup; while Hubert was still, a feeling of quietness creeping over brain and limbs, as he lay in the warm air after his long exposure to the severe cold. It was a relief after the blows both had received; and the torpid dreaminess was soothing. He was sorry when the tea was ready, and he had to rouse himself to answer Mr. Cox at his side, asking, "Will you sit up and take it, or have it there?"

"Oh, I must get up and have tea with you properly: it is a long time since I did last." But moving brought back the feeling of dizziness, and he lay down again. "No: I must ask you to give it to me here after all."

The bailiff knelt by him. "You are sure you are not ill? It doesn't look as if it had been such a very hard knock."

"Oh, I had more than one!" And when the cup was empty he turned his face to the cushion; and to all his host's urgent invitations to eat, or, at least, to have some more tea, he only answered, "No, please, Mr. Cox, it is a very rude way to treat you, but I should just like to lie quiet a little more. You go on as if I weren't here; or think I am your grey cat."

The bailiff said he certainly would think so, or anything else to please him, and fetched a cloak and threw it over him. As he lifted the boy's right hand, flung out on the carpet, to bring it within the covering, he saw it was clenched tightly upon a sheet of blue foreign paper, blotted in the exposed corners by the rain that had fallen upon it. The scrap of writing visible was not to be mistaken by his sharp eyes; and he drew his own conclusion, not very far wrong, as to the boy's unusual ways and looks; but he only said, "Do you know you are crumpling your letter? Shall I put it near the fire to dry?"

"No, thank you," and Hubert turned over, hiding it

beneath him, and lay so for more than an hour. Mr. Cox finished his tea and returned to his work; and that ended, began wondering if his visitor's long absence would not be causing anxiety up at the house. He took another look at him, and saw that his eyes were open. "Well, Master Hubert, you have had a sound sleep. I don't like to drive you away, but it is past eight: won't they be wondering what has become of you?"

"I haven't been asleep. Yes, I suppose they will: I'll go." And he sat up slowly, shoving his crumpled letter into his waistcoat pocket.

"Master Hubert, something ails you, doesn't it?" the bailiff asked kindly. "The foreign paper you had in your hand makes me think Mr. Oswald may have something to do with it: nothing is wrong with him I sincerely hope?"

"He hasn't said anything is, but everything is with me." He stood up, still looking half bewildered, and held out his hand to say good-bye.

"Everything wrong, Master Hubert? that is a bad hearing. But I can see something has troubled you very much this evening, worse than your knocks and bruises, and it grieves me to think it, after all the sorrow you have had of late, first with the death of the dear little lad at the Grange, and then not going to sea after all." Hubert wondered how he came to know that that had been a sorrow; but he only looked up at him: and Mr. Cox went on. "I have often wanted to say a word of comfort to you, if you will let me: I have been sad to see you sorrowing this long time. May I show you where I used to find a bit of comfort when I much wanted it, long years ago?"

He brought forward his large Bible as he spoke, and opened it at Lamentations, saying: "The prophet Jeremiah knew trouble of every kind, more and worse than you or I ever can; his country and his home and his friends all lost. Now see here the way he comforts himself: in the third chapter it is, by what I call his *four threes*, and they are

just as true for us as for him ; even when we feel to say, as you do, that everything is wrong with us. It was your own kind good mother showed them to me, and drew these lines, soon after I came here, when I was in much sorrow, and had not learned the good to be got out of it. I can mind now how she sat at this very table, and little Mr. Oswald—he was not much higher than it then—listening so solemn to every word she said.” Hubert looked over at the broad page, and the bracketed verses ; and the bailiff spoke on. “Here it is : at the twenty-second verse. His first *three* are three blessings. *First*, he had not received what, as a sinner, he deserved,—of God’s mercies he was not consumed ; *second*, the compassions of the Lord are his still, new every morning ; and *third*, if all else is gone for him, the blessing, safe for time and eternity, is his yet,—‘The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.’ Now comes the second *three* : three good things to remember. ‘The Lord is *good* to them that wait for Him ; it is *good* that a man should both hope and quietly wait for His help ; it is *good* for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth.’ That last seems hard to believe, Master Hubert ; and I think Jeremiah must have thought so, for he gives for the third *three* three reasons why. ‘Because he hath borne it upon him he is silent at last under it : he has learnt submission to God ; because he hath borne it upon him he puts his mouth in the dust : he learns humility before God ; because he hath borne it upon him he giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him : he learns patience towards men.’ Then comes the fourth *three* ; and that is three comforts. ‘The Lord will not cast off for ever :’ when the lessons are well learned, joy will be given. Then number two : ‘Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His mercies.’ Who can dread griefs, dear lad, that are sent with pity, and from Him whose mercies are in multitudes ? And then comes the last of the comforts, and the best, to my mind : ‘For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children

of men.' Will you think of my *four threes* sometimes?" the bailiff asked, after a little silence.

The boy nodded assent, and held out his hand, with a murmured, "Yes, often : thank you very much." His voice was lost just then ; the words he had been listening to had, more than one of them, recalled what made further speech an impossibility. But he looked up with a watery smile ; and Mr. Cox, seeing he was troubled, said no more, only getting him his lantern, to light him home, and bidding him good-bye, with the parting invitation, " And mind you come again soon, and take tea with me in better fashion." The pattering rain-drops from the eaves brought the added offer of an umbrella, at which Hubert smiled, giving the sleeve of his jacket to be felt. " And you have been lying there in those wet clothes all this time !" And with redoubled charges to hasten home and change at once, he was sent off, with the last call after him, " If you don't, you are certain to be ill."

Such a warning was one Hubert was not quick to believe, and he was soon sitting in the library with his books before him, imagining he was going to work. The page was open under his eyes, but the letters danced before them, and his head, as it rested heavily on his hand, seemed as if it could hold nothing but that one idea which had fixed itself in it with such painful violence, " Uncle has cast me off : unfit for him to love." The more he tried to add another to it the dizzier he grew again, and he wanted the cold air he had left to clear his brain.

Mr. Maynard was disagreeably saluted on his return to the room by a blast from the open window, and called out in surprise to have it closed. " You surely are not hot such a night as this. Where have you been ? Your father is tired with his journey and has gone to bed : he wanted to speak to you. Why, what is the matter ?" he asked quickly, as Hubert, after doing as he told him, turned into the room again. " Hubert, what does your uncle say to you ?"

The boy hesitated a moment, then saying, "Yes, you know him," produced the paper from his pocket, flattened it out, laid it in his tutor's hand, going to the sofa and flinging himself down upon it.

The few lines seemed to take a long time to read, and when at last it was laid down an expressive, "Well," was at first the only comment.

"But what can have possessed him to take such an idea into his head?" Mr. Maynard began, after a time. "Deceived him: it is infamous, writing to you like this! This is dashed off in the heat of passion. I would not think about it if I were you, Hubert: he will come to his senses in a little, and write again. He had better doubt his own truth before accusing you of deception on no grounds whatever; or of a want of moral courage either. What has taken the boy to get hold of such a notion! You would have done much better to have written to him yourself, as I said: it is that which has vexed him. You haven't taken in, I daresay, his share of the disappointment all this has given: he had set his heart on having you with him."

"No," Hubert said: "I am thankful I did not, or he would have had my letter to despise as well as me." He was surprised at his companion's unusual vehemence, but cared little to think of anything beyond the one fact, "Uncle despises me, and wants no more of me;" what the cause might be he thought little of. "I told him plainly before he went," he added, after a while, "that I had not altered my wishes in the least, and of course he knows I could not. How could I? He must know I only did it because I was obliged."

"I tell you, Hubert, it has been written in a passion: he is too fond of you to bear losing you calmly."

"No, no, Mr. Maynard: that would be the pleasantest to believe; but uncle never gets into that sort of passion, so as not to know what he is saying or writing. No, I see why he has not written before: it is just because he was very

angry,—oh, I knew he would be!—and chose to wait till he could write that quiet sort of letter; though I can see he is angry enough still by his signing his name full length. He never writes out Archibald except when he is.”

The boy's sentences came out in jerks as he moved restlessly about, and Mr. Maynard, as he read the letter over again, was fain to believe him right. “All you can do, then, is to write and tell him he is wrong.”

“Write and tell him I have not ‘stooped to deceive him’? No, thank you, sir: he may know that without my telling. If I had ever done anything to deceive him, or ever done anything else than love him with all my heart and soul, I would. No: he has thrown me away from him, and wants nothing more from me. All I can say is, I wish either he or I had died before last autumn: to lose Harry, even, was easier than to lose him, and like this.” He hid his face on his arm as he spoke, adding, nearly inaudibly, “Perhaps some day he may remember me again as he knows I am: he has forgotten me now.”

“He must, he must,” Mr. Maynard said; “but still write, and ask his reasons for such an accusation, in simple justice to yourself.”

“Never, Mr. Maynard! And he has no reason; except that I did not tell him when he was with us, when I didn't know myself. Why should I have been afraid to tell him? No: I could not write and say I did not mean to deceive him. He shall never be troubled with me again,—he says it is all over between us,—*never*, till he says he wants me back. He despises me now, and has given up loving me. Oh, how I have dreaded it; and now it has come! Oh, uncle, uncle! Oh, how can I lose you like this!”

The tutor sat silent, looking sadly at him, forbearing to re-urge his advice just then, seeing the grievous wound which both pride and affection had received. He said at last, going to his side, “Well, if your theory is true, that a good man cannot continue in wrong doing, as I heard you

once maintaining to your sister, he will find out his folly presently, and be sorry enough then."

"No, it isn't folly: he thinks what I have done is only worth despising—I knew he would—and so doesn't want to have anything more to do with me. I know he loved me so much before because he respected me: he said he did once."

"And so he will still; and more still if you will only do as I tell you, and write and tell him all about it."

"I told him the day he went, as plainly as possible, that I had not changed my mind a bit, and that I should always wish the same to the end of my life. If my word is not enough for him, writing won't make it so; and indeed, sir, I could not. I see he thinks me good for nothing: he said it would be filling a woman's place to stay at home;" and with the half-sobbing cry, "Oh, uncle: the best I had to love!" again his face was turned out of sight.

The close mixture of love and pride nearly raised a smile on the tutor's compassionate face. He expected a rush of tears the next thing; but though his mouth was working his eyes were dry as before, when he turned round again, saying, "I can't do my lessons to-night, sir: please let me off. When these sort of things come they make a whirl in my head: I can't think straight."

"Why, how wet your hair is," Mr. Maynard said, as he touched it, giving a nodded assent to the request; "and your clothes too. Why, Hubert, you are wet through!"

"It is only rain. It is nearly bed time: I'll put them out to be dried then."

A few inquiries brought him a sharp reprimand on his carelessness, driving other subjects aside. "I should like to know how many hours you have been in these soaking things in alternating heat and cold: a better way to get a severe cold could hardly be invented; no wonder you look as you do." Mr. Maynard felt it a relief to have found something he could scold for just then.

"But indeed, sir, I am beginning to get warm again now: my under things are nearly dry. It is my head makes me look queer, I daresay: I never have colds."

"Have you bought an indulgence from heaven, that you never shall? Go away up to bed at once, and be thankful if you escape rheumatic fever, or something as bad."

Hubert thought he should care very little what he got, if only he might keep his head on the cushion; but he dared make no such assertion to his tutor, who drove him away, his reprimand softening into the kindest of 'Good nights,' and the hope that a night's rest would set his head to rights.

He little wondered at the complaint, that it felt "odd." He had noticed ever since the shock of O'Hara's sudden death that the happening of anything startling or painful showed how the effect of it upon him had not passed away; and Oswald's letter had come to him with a bewildering blow, causing pain no less intense, and with an added bitterness that the former sorrow had not known. As the tutor sat alone, visions of his old lost home rose before him. "What would I not give," he said to himself, "to put him down on those brown rocks, with the salt wind in his face: a week among them and the fir woods, away from this unwholesome sameness of life, with nothing to turn his mind to fresh subjects, would soon set his nerves right again, poor fellow! If I were only ten years younger, or not what I am, I could be of some use to him."

He was hardly sorry to see next morning that his prophecy of a severe cold was likely to be fulfilled. It was better to see the boy hanging over the fire, or lolling half asleep on the sofa, wondering at his own feelings, than to try and get work from his burdened preoccupied mind. It saved him questioning also from his father, who was too much disturbed at seeing him for the first time ailing, to think of anything else about him. A passing remark on his letter, and the question, whether uncle was vexed, for that in his letter to him he had barely mentioned Hubert, and not spoken of

Osbert at all, was easily answered ; and the subject, not personally affecting him, it was soon forgotten, and his son was left to sorrow in peace. Those days were the heaviest and dreariest Hubert had ever known. He was thankful for the bodily discomfort which veiled the other suffering, while he lay in heavy dreaminess or feverish restlessness, on the sofa or rug, as the fancy took him, listening to the quiet sound of his little brother's lessons, or musing in silence when the tutor wrote at the table or read in his chair by the fire.

Not a word further was said between them, at that time, on the cause of Hubert's grief. Mr. Maynard was not one to intrude his sympathy uninvited, and willingly avoided touching upon a subject causing so much pain ; while Hubert laid his uncle's name aside with that of his lost friend ; never speaking it, and shrinking from mention of him with the same sensitiveness as from the remotest reference to O'Hara. And as time went on, his silence spread to the others in the house ; and the name which had been most often on his tongue ceased to be heard. The children soon found that to speak of uncle Oswald was to make Hubert stop speaking altogether.

Mr. Maynard sometimes wondered if such tears as had been shed for O'Hara, or for the frustration of his hopes, were ever shed by him over this grief, which he saw plainly was the deepest of all. He thought often that nothing else was the cause of the exhausted quiet of voice and heavy eyes when he had been away on one of his long rides alone ; if so, the heather and rocks on the moor were safe witnesses, and he was growing reticent of showing feeling before others, this above all, and was learning by experience how to control it.

Mr. Maynard's heart ached for him often : the spring and joyousness seemed so entirely gone from him, and all hearty interest in everything lost. His very laughter, whenever it was heard, and that was not often, had a sound to his watchful

tutor's ears of sadness behind. More than once he had it in his mind to write the letter of explanation, which he saw Hubert would not ; but he never did it, partly from dislike of the thought from personal reasons, and partly from fear of making matters worse by untimely interference. He also was always expecting what Hubert never did,—a second letter to atone for the first.

Weeks had lengthened into months when he once more repeated his advice to Hubert, as to what he thought he ought to do, and the answer he got was decided : “ Indeed, Mr. Maynard, I could not do such a thing, as ask him to love me again, when he has given up doing it. I tell you after that letter I could as soon write to the Queen as to him. He would call it impudence if I did. He has pushed me from him ; and wants nothing more from me.”

His tutor saw that his mind was made up, and after that let him alone about the matter.



CHAPTER XXIII.

HIS PLACE FILLED.

“And memory with her soft eyes full,
Backward her glance still bent.”

IT was a bright balmy-feeling morning in the early summer, and the head gardener was busy among the beds of roses. The little girls followed his steps, begging for a bud here and there, first for papa's, and then for their brother's buttonholes; and then the other beds were visited in turn for sprigs of mignonette, to lay beside the greater treasure; and Mr. Raymond, pacing to and fro, with his hand on Hubert's arm, was soon brought to a stand by the eager children. As the decorations were fastened in their places, Minnie, dancing on her toes, declaring they looked lovely, cried to her sister, “Now, Nelly, we'll make one for Mr. Maynard. How I wish all the others were at home, and we would do them all!”

“I don't think Mr. Maynard will consent to be *done* Minnie,” Hubert said. “He never will wear flowers in his buttonhole. I tried to make him have one last Sunday, and he wouldn't.”

“He won't say No if *I* give them to him,” little Helen said, confidently. And the two ran away to make their attempt.

“What has put this idea into his head, Hu.,” Mr. Raymond asked, as they resumed their walk, “about leaving us? You

don't think he is not comfortable in any way ; or is he more unwell ?

" I did not know that he had any thought of the kind," Hubert answered, surprised. " He has not dared to say such a thing to me : he knows how I should howl at him. You don't think he means it : do you ? "

" You would not like it if he did : eh ? So I told him ; but he seems to think it unfair to you to remain,—that you need a younger companion. He says that a man fresh from College would be far better for you,—that his want of vigour prevents him being anything but teacher ; and that you are moping."

" Won't I give it him well ! " Hubert said, indignantly kicking the stones before him. " About the worst thing that could happen to me would be to lose him."

" I denied the fact of the moping," Mr. Raymond said, looking round at his son. " Happily I had good proof at the minute, for we had met near the cricket field, and you certainly were looking little like moping then ; and it is what I have rarely seen you do. Not that I think my proof convinced him : and he has got this notion fixed, that he is doing you an injury by staying."

Hubert looked disturbed, and walked on some way in silence ; then said, " I daresay I know what has set him thinking of it. I have persuaded him at last to give up coming down for me before breakfast, and to let me work with him in the evening instead ; and now I tell him he is out in his arithmetic, for he is so devoted to getting up early that he will not see that I do exactly the same amount of work."

" Did he find it try him that you persuaded him against it ? I have thought for some time that he has looked weaker and thinner."

" Yes : twice he has had fits of faintness, and had to lie down ; so I told him it would be much wiser to stay quietly in bed till breakfast time. He can often hardly read prayers as it is, and I have to do it for him. I shall give him a

second preachment now about this nonsense about going away. He will mind me."

"You think as Nelly does,—that you are irresistible," his father said, amused.

"He'll do most things I ask him: dear old fellow!" said Hubert. "And I think I can show him my disgust at the idea of having some horrid young man, not ten years older than I am, lording it over me in his place. I am quite sure no other man in the kingdom could teach better."

"In that I agree with you. To find such a scholar, and one of his years and experience, is a rare chance. I told him so; but he says his life here is just what has suited him. I am very sure my book-shelves have. He said, if he did leave, he should never take another pupil; and he did not attempt to conceal that it would be very hard to him to give you up now, when you are so far advanced, and a pupil, as he expressed it, entirely after his own heart."

"I'll settle him, then," said Hubert, looking pleased. And they walked on in silence.

"You are quite sure, dear son," Mr. Raymond asked, after they had made another turn, "that I was right in contradicting him about you? There is nothing troubling you: is there?"

"Making me mope, papa?" Hubert asked, lightly. "I think you were right in saying it was what you never saw me do."

"Aye: but does he?"

"He must say first what he means by moping. He sees me mostly at work; and precious hard work too, sometimes."

"One thing you most certainly have to vex you,—your uncle's strangely long silence towards you," Mr. Raymond said, meditatively. "It is a heartless way of treating you, and looks uncommonly like a fit of temper, for which he deserves to have his ears boxed. By the way, Hu., I did as you wished the other day, and paid him back his money; though I may tell you now what his intention was: that, as

soon as you had gained your lieutenancy, the money was to have been your own. It was merely a loan to me for your benefit, at a time when I was rather harassed about money matters." Hubert flushed painfully with many feelings; and his father said, "On further consideration, I thought you were right about it, particularly when this silence of his towards you shows his change of feeling for you too plainly to doubt it. It was better to show him that he was at liberty to change his mind, as you had changed yours. I told him it was at your wish I did it."

"Oh, papa: did you?" Hubert cried, stopping in his walk. "You don't mean you said it so, about his changing his mind? Oh, he'll think —— But no: never mind." And he stepped on again. Mr. Raymond looked at him, wondering what he was thinking; but the subject they had got upon was not one he liked, and he turned from it, exclaiming, "Why, what are the girls rushing back like this for?"

The children were flying towards them, followed by their two brothers.

"Oh, papa, Hubert," Minnie cried, "we can't think what can be the matter with Mr. Maynard! We peeped through the window at him, and called him; but he didn't answer us. He is sitting at the table, with his head on it: so still!"

"Keep them all here, papa!" Hubert cried, and rushed off.

His little sister's fears were not to be wondered at he thought, as he sprang into the room over the window-sill. It was not a new thing to him to see his tutor overcome by sudden faintness; but he had never before entirely lost consciousness. And the boy held his breath as he put his hand on his arm, and he still remained motionless; but when the touch had been repeated with harder pressure, it roused him. Hubert met his look of half-bewilderment, as memory and thought were slow in returning, with the anxious inquiry, "What was it, sir? You frightened me.

Are you ill? or what is it? You have not had any more bad news, I do hope?"

As he spoke, he saw it was not so: there was no trouble or look of pain in his tutor's face; only bewilderment.

"No, no," he said, faintly, rising to his feet; and then sinking down into the armchair: "only everything upsets me so now." Hubert stood by him, wondering what to do or say for a few minutes; when he said, low and quickly, as though forgetful of his companion's presence, "If sinners are to be pursued with evil, surely when evil is exchanged for good the sinner may know that pardon at last is given,—vengeance satisfied by the long evil borne." He spoke in the agitated excited tone the boy shrank from hearing.

"Don't, Mr. Maynard," he said: "I hate so to hear you say such things. If evil does pursue us, it is much better to think instead of what else pursues us."

"What is that?" the tutor asked, speaking more quietly.

Hubert answered, gently, "The love of Jesus Christ on His cross: He says He came there to seek the very ones that you say evil pursues." He had long wished he had courage to say something of the kind, and now the sight of his companion's face had given it him. It was terrible to him to think of one he loved, haunted by, what seemed his tutor's belief, the vengeance of God following him. As he sought himself for daily pardon, it was not often now that he forgot to ask the same blessing for the one, who, as he had good grounds for believing, never dared ask it for himself. Why not? he continually wondered. He was afraid, for a moment, lest his words had given offence; but Mr. Maynard only looked up at him, and then said, quietly, "Should you mind beginning work half an hour later this morning? I shall feel myself again by then: it is true what I tell your father, that I am no longer fit to tutor you."

"It won't make the shadow of a difference, sir," Hubert said, cheerfully: "it is only working up to dinner time instead. I'll tell Godfrey," and he left him.

He made his report to his father, that he could not think what had made him ill, but that he seemed nearly right again now ; and Mr. Raymond, thinking to console him, said, " You know Dr. Scott says he is very seriously out of health : you must not be surprised at these sudden faintnesses, particularly if anything agitates him. To be sure, there was a letter for him this morning, which I sent to the library : that, no doubt, is the cause of this."

Hubert was glad when the half hour was over, and he might return to the room, where he found his tutor as he had left him, and ready to begin work. Except that he and Godfrey had to recall his attention several times during the course of the morning, everything went its ordinary way, and he began to fear he was to hear nothing more of the cause of the morning's agitation, till, as he was leaving the room, Mr. Maynard called him back, saying, " Hubert, can you stop a few minutes? I want to speak to you."

He was soon seated on the edge of the table, waiting for the words, which seemed long in coming. " Well, sir," he prompted at last, fearing the ringing of the dinner bell.

His companion looked up then, saying, sadly, " I don't like telling you now what I must. The good which has come to me will only give trouble to you, I am afraid."

" Never mind about me, sir : I hoped perhaps you had had some good news at last."

" And you were right ; at least most people would call it good unmixed. It seemed so to me for the first few moments : as I look at it more there are many things to cloud the joy of it."

" But please, Mr. Maynard— "

" Yes, I will tell you," he said, speaking slowly. " I have heard this morning from my lawyer. He tells me that my old home is mine once more." He rose, as he said it, and walked the length of the room, talking to himself in an under tone.

Hubert could only catch a word here and there, and

called to him at last: "Please come and sit down again, do, and tell me how it is, and all about it; I am so exceedingly glad. Why did you say I should be sorry?"

"I had no right to think so, perhaps," the tutor said; "but I am: very."

Hubert started. "Oh, I had not thought of that! Of course you will go and live there."

Mr. Maynard made no answer, only pressed his shoulder and turned back to his chair, and for some minutes neither of them spoke another word. The boy sat dumb with dismay. Sorry,—that was no word for what he felt. His last friend to be taken from him; but it did not do to think of then, and he asked, at last, "Did you expect ever to have it back?"

"No, I never dreamed of it: I thought it gone for ever. I cannot yet believe it mine again; and yet all these years I have never really been able to believe it was not. I shall feel the sea wind in my face again, now, before I die."

Again Hubert had to recall him, asking, "Then how has it come back to you?"

"Left to me by will. The cousin to whom I lost it,—he had been abroad for many years, and had been long considered dead, and I had inherited,—has just died. He was a married man with a family, and naturally I thought of no possibility ever restoring to me what I once thought so inalienably mine. I had never seen his wife, or children. My lawyer now tells me what I did not know before,—that he had married when abroad a coloured woman, that they were not happy together, and he was ashamed of introducing her in his new position. They were separated soon after they came to England, and she went out to the West Indies to her own people, taking her daughters with her; while the sons, two of them, I believe, were educated in England, and then sent out to some situation in the colonies. He has since lived alone, and the whole of the property is left again to myself. Yes, it is indeed a blessing,—one to say 'Thank

God,' for : to know the rocks and pine woods my own again, though it be only for a little while ; and rightly mine. He never had any right to it, for if my grandfather had had the slightest thought of his being still alive he would have made it sure to me—My home." The two words were spoken with a world of sadness in their tone.

"What a mercy he didn't marry a lady," was Hubert's comment. "I can't tell you how glad I am you have got it again. You are glad, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am glad : glad my last years are not to be passed in some London back street ; glad, too, to feel myself again as I was in my happy youth. And yet, when I think that I must go there, I feel as if I would give it all up, sooner than look upon it again. What fool so great as the one who barter for one joy the peace of a lifetime!"

The words made Hubert long to ask the question he had had so often in his mind ; but as Mr. Maynard rose, with agitated manner, he thought it kinder to turn his thoughts by speaking of some of the regrets for himself which he would else have left unsaid just then. "And the end of it will be, that I shall grow up a dunce after all," he added.

"No, you won't do that : and if it had not been for my health I would have said nothing about this now, and stayed on with you—truly would I," he said, as Hubert exclaimed. "I had hoped to have prepared you myself for College, but for some time past I have known that might not be. It is a great disappointment to me to give you up. I have thought of a plan for you, however, which I will do my best to get your father to agree to."

"Not some horrid young man from College : I would turn that armchair out of the room before he came."

Mr. Maynard laughed, saying, "No : I should not think it fair to any possible young man to expose him to your malice. I only wish your father would consent to your going to school ; but he was very short and decided when I proposed that."

"Oh, no," Hubert said: "I might just as well then have had what I wanted."

The bell rang. "Well, Hubert, my dear boy, you will come and see me at home: there is pleasure in saying the old word again. I only wish I could take you there with me straight: no,—better not; but the thought of welcoming you there will be what I shall look forward to."

"You may depend on me," Hubert said, radiant at the idea. "I have so often wished I could see it, and the cliffs and all: only be sure and make papa give you a promise at once, when you first tell him you are going away,—just when he is first sorry for me."

Mr. Maynard smiled at his prudent suggestion, but followed it; and the promise was heartily given.

It was not long after that morning that the tutor's place in the house was left empty, never for him to fill again; and Hubert was thankful no substitute was found. The plan proposed for him, after many objections had been raised to it by his father, had at last been settled; and now every day saw him start directly after breakfast for the house of a clergyman, some four miles distant from Raymond Stoke. Mr. Austin had other pupils living with him; and Mr. Maynard had judged wisely in thinking that the change from lonely study to companionship would soften the first distress to Hubert of the loss of his old teacher. His new one was astonished to find that his youngest pupil had far distanced the four he joined. When his father asked him, after a week or two of his new life, how he liked it, his answer was, "Very well. The other fellows are all very jolly; only they call me a *sap*, which I was never called before. They had better have been under Mr. Maynard for a month, to hear what he would have called the way they do their work. As to Mr. Austin, he is very kind; but of course he can't teach like Mr. Maynard."

Eight miles a day being too much walking, he rode one way each time; and happy was he when the turn for riding

from home fell on the same day as the advent of one of Mr. Maynard's constant letters, that he might be late enough in his start to take it with him. They were a great pleasure to him, though there was not much incident in the writer's quiet life to relate; but it was like enjoying one of their long talks again to have one of the neat sheets as his companion on his ride; and hardly one of them but had some reference to the time when the promised visit should be claimed.

Hubert, as he thought of it, only wished the months could move faster. His only other special interest was out at the lime kilns, where, by Mr. Prescott's desire, he had assumed Geraldine's old office at the Orphanage. It had been at Mr. Maynard's suggestion that his help had been asked. "I want him interested," he had said, when paying his farewell visit at the Rectory: "interested, or at least occupied,—taken out of himself; and the busier he is, the happier he is likely to grow. He is completely broken spirited; and his father dotes on him, and does not see him changed, and flatters himself that he is companion enough for him. He loses his last at home now, for Godfrey goes to school. Any out-door occupation would be good for him, and help to keep him out of Mr. Raymond's study,—who would hardly thank me for saying so, but it is not the place for a boy of fourteen, after a day's work."

Mr. Prescott was earnest to do as he was asked, saying he had often pitied the boy going about so constantly alone; and it was not long before Hubert was set to work. He began by doubting his capability of being useful; but was pleased at the idea of helping the old clergyman, and pleased not a little at the thought of whose work he was to aid. As months passed on Mr. Prescott found him a very useful assistant in many ways, and dubbed him his lay curate.

As the summer came to its height, and Mr. Austin's pupils were counting the days to their holidays, Hubert tried eagerly to get his father to name a day for his long talked-of

visit. He was longing for the time to come, and his father always put him off. It was not only for the intense pleasure it would be to him to be with his old friend again, but he was wearying for a change: craving, with all a boy's eagerness, for something fresh to see and think of, something pleasant and bright, like what his companions were talking of, and looking forward to with the coming holidays. Before he had gained his wish the summer was waning, the holidays had been some time over; and it was Dr. Scott whom he had to thank that he was at last sitting facing his old tutor, now his host, in his Cumberland home.

"What is that noise, Mr Maynard?" he was asking. "It has gone on ever since I have been in the room."

"I hear no noise," was the answer. Mr. Maynard was sitting watching, with great satisfaction, the boyish face opposite him at the table, and the full justice which was being done to the supper, already kept waiting long enough to make no second invitation to it necessary. "Hubert, it is good to see you here at last." And he held out his hand for another grasp, most warmly returned. "I began to think I was never to have you after all. Is it that booming noise you mean? That is only the sea running into the rifts between the rocks. There is rather a wind to-night."

"I should think there was. It was that made us so late. It nearly stopped the coach coming over the high moor."

"And this is nothing to what we have sometimes. Sometimes the strength of it is such that you would not be safe to stand near the edge of the cliffs, and the waves dash their spray over you. You will like to see that, Hubert."

"I shall like everything. I have never seen waves in my life; only rippling water over flat sand. Oh, you can't tell how glad I am to have got here at last! I wish it were light now, that I could see out."

"You must see what is within to-night," Mr. Maynard said, smiling at his face of extreme content. "When you have quite finished I will show you your room. I daresay

you will be glad to get to bed, after your long journey. I have not treated you as my housekeeper wished, and put you into the best guest chamber," he said, presently, as they went upstairs together, Hubert looking right and left with the lively curiosity of one to whom everything fresh was as yet a fresh pleasure. "I thought you would like to be in your uncle's old room. I had it all put back as it was in his days, as soon as I came home. I was right in thinking you would like to be in here: was I not? My old servants still call it Master Raymond's room."

He turned the handle as he spoke, and they went into a pretty, curiously shaped room, ready lighted from a silver lamp hanging from the ceiling, and a bright fire burning. When Hubert had made his silent survey, taking note of the different things which still remained to remind of its once inhabitant, the large model of a fishing smack on a bracket on the wall, and the whips and fishing rod above the mantel-piece, he stood before the fire for some minutes without speaking. Mr. Maynard had seated himself beside it. "You have not heard from him yet?" he asked at last. Hubert shook his head, and his companion regretted his choice of room for him as he saw his bright look darkened. "I am going to sit here to talk to you while you take out your things; and tell me the news," he said. "Come, now, you are not come up here to mourn over past sorrows; but to forget them. Tell me first how was it you got leave to come to me all of a sudden."

Hubert banished his thoughts, and seating himself on the rug, with his arms round his knees, began his story, prefacing it with a satisfied "Now we are just as I have wanted to be hundreds of times. I have wanted you dreadfully lately, while papa has been ill."

"And I have thought more than once of coming down to you, if it had not been for the journey. What was the cause of your father's illness?"

That, Hubert said, he had never been able to discover.

"It was something that Uncle Colin was talking to him about, when we were spending a week at his Rectory, that seemed first to worry him; and he got worse and worse from that time."

It was a long story the boy had to tell,—of illness, anxiety, and loneliness; and Mr. Maynard pitied him more, as he heard it, than he had done before, even from his letters. "Why did you not send for Maxwell?" he asked.

"I thought I must at last, for I saw Dr. Scott was frightened; but he was just in the thick of his examination. Oh, it was so dreadful being there all alone,—at least, with only Miss Sturt to speak to, and only nurse beside me in his room! And he kept on constantly talking of our mother, and thinking I was she. Oh, Mr. Maynard, if I ever felt thankful for anything in my life, I did then,—that I had not gone away and left him last autumn; if I had, I should have felt like a murderer! Only think if he had been ill like that with no one near him! Dr. Scott would let no one else go into the room; not even Aunt Kate, when she came at last. He seemed not to be able to bear me out of his sight: you see, he let me see more what he felt when he was so weak."

"I knew well you would never repent your self-denial," his companion said; "and, for your sake, I am glad you have had this seal to the need and right of it. But now you have not told me how you got away after all. You had only just written that you could not leave your father."

"Why, the day before yesterday, when I had quite given up any hopes of coming, for the Doctor said he should insist on papa's going abroad as soon as he could move, and that I must go with him, he suddenly called me to him, and said, "Let me look at you;" and then there he was telling me to write to you, and to speak to nurse to pack my things. I found out afterwards that Mr. Prescott and Mr. Cox and Dr. Scott had all been with him at different times that morning; and each of them had begun at him

about me, saying I was looking ill. The Doctor had been wanting me to go away for the last fortnight ; and he began humbugging papa, feeling my pulse, and shaking his head. The end of it all was, I was packed off. If three old men all make the same mistake at the same time, it is not my fault : is it ? ”

Mr. Maynard laughed, saying, “ I am much obliged to them, anyway, and must add a fourth to their number, in thinking your face quite white and thin enough to make sea air and change a very salutary thing, and sitting up late not so ; so I shall say good night, and leave the rest of our chat for the morning. ”

And they soon exchanged their farewells ; Hubert saying affectionately, as they did so, “ Saying good night to you again seems like saying it to my second father : it feels so natural. ”

He could not have said what would have given greater pleasure to his old tutor, who drew him towards him, saying, “ God bless you, Hubert ! Feel so always to me. Having you with me makes me feel afresh what I might have had if my baby son had lived. Don’t let the waves keep you awake. ”

They were very happy together for the next ten days : Hubert quickly recovering looks and spirits in the bracing briny air, and enjoying intensely the new scenes and the unceasing amusement he found among them ; while Mr. Maynard watched over his pleasures with untiring interest. Hubert was pained to see, as he soon did, how greatly his weakness had increased : his walk was slower than ever, his hours later, and every motion feebler. But when he questioned him, he answered evasively that he had not been feeling very well lately ; but that now his companionship must cheer him up.

The boy often wondered to himself, as he ran down for his bathe in the early morning, to the bathing-place built below the house, how his host’s time was passed in his

solitude, and tried to picture him as Oswald had described him,—young, bright, and active, with his now silent house sounding with children's voices. His gravity seemed deeper than of old, if that could be, except when his boy-guest's liveliness proved infectious; but though grave, the bitter melancholy of former days seemed to have left him. He was not able to go about with Hubert himself: his utmost exertion was a stroll to the highest peak of the cliff, where a stone seat had been placed among the gorse; but he introduced him to a friend, who took him out shooting and fly-fishing, and put him in charge of an old boatman from the neighbouring fishing village, to spend hours upon the water, learning the management of a boat, and catching whiting and gurnet. Hubert apologized more than once for being away from him so much, and entreated him to come down with him to the water's edge. "Only just stand on the end of your little pier, and see how delicious the water looks; and I am sure then you will be tempted to get into the boat, and let me row you about. Thomas says I pull well now: do come."

To his surprise, Mr. Maynard answered him decidedly, "No, Hubert: never ask me that again. I never go upon the water;" then added, in his usual kind tone, "but you go, my boy, and enjoy yourself. Don't think of me. I should not be the happier to know you poking about after me all day. I look forward to the sight of your fresh face in the evening, and your day's story."

So Hubert went off alone. But one day mourned to his old companion, as he looked up, and saw the grey hat on the cliff, that he was so sorry Mr. Maynard didn't like rowing; and he had refused even to come down to see them start.

"Well, sir," the fisherman answered him, "and it is not to be wondered at, if the poor gentleman is not partial to the sea, or the jetty; and you would say so too if you had heard my missis tell of the sight she saw there, when she

and all the rest of the servants ran down to the rocks, when there was the cry made that the master's boat had swamped."

"Why, how had that happened?" Hubert asked; his curiosity excited, as he seemed on the point of gaining the knowledge he had wished for so long. "Tell me how it was."

"As to that, no one knew rightly how it happened, for Mr. Maynard was a good sailor, and could sail a boat with the best of us; and there was nothing more than a pretty stiff breeze on. But there it was, anyway: the boat bottom up, and him, as my wife has often told me, standing on the jetty, with the sea water streaming from him, his hands and face all cut with the rocks; for he had swum to shore with the little lady, and then sprung in again for the poor little boy. But they were both lying for dead at his feet when she saw them. The other gentleman, who was out with them,—Mr. Maynard's particular friend,—who was always about with him, was drowned too; but his body was washed out to sea, and was not found for some days."

"And were both the children dead?" Hubert asked.

"They thought so at first, but the young lady lived a week or two after that; but Mr. Maynard knew nothing of that then: he was like one beside himself, calling himself their murderer. Our clergyman took him home with him for a long time, and then he went away to foreign parts. He has never held his head up from that time to this, and trouble has seemed to follow him ever since."

Hubert continued his fishing for a little in silence, comparing the story with the occasional references to the sorrows of his past life, made in his hearing by his tutor. "Surely this cannot be the thing he is always blaming himself so for!" Then he asked, "Did he never come back here again after that?"

"Oh, yes, sir! He was away nigh upon a year, and then came home and was married; but I should hardly have known him for the same: he was turned quite grey, and stooped like an old man. They say now he won't be long

before he follows the two pretty children to the vault under the Church."

Feeling a sudden cessation of interest in his lines and hooks, as the old man continued his reminiscences, Hubert soon drew them up, saying he would go back again now. He was speedily climbing the steep path to the top of the cliff, and for the rest of the afternoon he forsook the delights of boat and sea for his friend's side, and would not leave him, longing to express the sympathy he could not speak, and to see for himself what signs there were that could make the village people such prophets of evil. One thing he did see, as he came suddenly upon him, which startled him for the moment. On the seat beside him, an open pocket Bible was lying, and he was sitting as if lost in thought, with his head resting on the top of his walking stick. He had never seen a Bible near to his tutor in all the days they had lived together, except at family prayers. But after all, as he told himself, a man may take to reading it without that being any proof that he thought himself near the end of his life. So he encouraged himself; but still he felt uneasy, and, with redoubled earnestness, repeated his often-uttered wish, as they went back to the house together, when the sun went down,—“How I wish I could be your son as well as papa's, and stay here with you always!”

“You must not say that,” his companion said, pressing the arm he was resting on, “or you will make it all the harder for me to avoid breaking the tenth commandment.”

They were stepping into the hall, and Hubert sprang forward at sight of a letter on the table, crying, “There is papa's crest!” adding, disappointed, “Oh, it is for you!”

“To cure me of my coveting propensities,” Mr. Maynard said, as he finished reading it, and put it into the boy's hand.

“Oh, this is too bad: to go home so soon, and for no reason either! Oh, Mr. Maynard: mayn't I write and ask him to let me stay?”

“You have not been here a fortnight. But I fear writing

would be little use. Let us go in and sit down. I am sorry,—very sorry, indeed more grieved than I can say, to lose you just now. Give me the letter, and let me see if there is any chance of my keeping you.” He read it through, and said sadly, as he laid it down again, “No, my son: I must let you go. He says he shall expect you to-morrow.”

“It is too bad. What in life can he want one for in such a hurry?” Hubert said, passionately. “Why may I never have what I want? I am so happy here with you. I don’t want to see him again yet. Don’t say Hush! Mr. Maynard: I don’t mean anything wrong to him; but I have had no one but him for so long, and I hate the very thought of going back to it all. I was beginning to feel I can’t tell you how at home,—as if there were nothing in the world to care for; and one can’t forget things there, and here one can. What can he want me for, when he says he is better, and yet says he must have me home? I do think he might sometimes think of what I should like, as well as what he does. There, I think I had better go and change my fishy jacket; and then come to you in a better temper.” And he turned and went upstairs.

He was bitterly disappointed; pained at what he thought most selfish indifference to his happiness, and dreading, far more than the loss of his present pleasures, the return to the haunting consciousness in his solitary life of his uncle’s estrangement, and to what was a growing dread,—his possible return any day to the house. He stood long now at his window, looking over the sea where the moon was just rising, thinking thoughts too bitter to be pleasant or right, and yet hard to change in the first flush of disappointment and indignation. The silver line on the water, as it advanced wave by wave under the mounting light, recalled presently to his mind the evening of the day when his uncle had planned the picnic for them to the point. It was then for the first time he had seen the moon’s reflection on

the sea, as they started on their way home. It seemed a very long time since then, and yet as clearly as if they had been spoken yesterday he could hear in his fancy Oswald's call back to him: "Look to the horizon, Hu. That is a sight you will soon know well, though you have never seen it before." Till last week he had never seen it again, and now still he looked at it from land. Other memories of that evening followed: how firm then he had seemed to hold all he valued most; now but one blessing out of the many he had summed up then stayed by him. If all other prized bonds of union with his uncle had proved brittle, and though they were now to each other as strangers, one thing, which first that day he had realized as uniting them, bound them together still as brothers for ever. It was on that evening that Oswald had welcomed him with his warm, kind words, as his fellow-servant to their heavenly Master,—one in the same obedience, bound for the same resting-place. The old sorrow came pressing down upon him again, as he leaned his head against the thick window-frame, looking out, till he started, saying, "Well, I have said a hundred times I won't think of you: we must be together then, and you won't be able to despise me there, nor be able to help loving me. Oh, if I could but see you again, and hear you speak as if you respected me, and I was your friend, as you did that evening; even with my sea life gone, and Harry dead, and only papa to be with, and nothing left to care for, I could feel happy again, I do believe, as I did that evening when I thought—poor goose that I was—that nothing could take my happiness away from me." He turned from the window with a yearning sigh of intense longing, and began to prepare himself for the evening. When he was ready, and had gone back for one more look out to sea, his ponderings over the past had led him to different feelings about his present disappointment, and anger and self-pity had given way before the quiet manly yielding which was his general habit. "It is only a part of

the same story after all. It is no good making up one's mind to go one way because it is right, and then think one has earned a right to grumble at what comes to one in it. I wonder if Harry's Roman martyr ever abused his chains, or got angry with his slave work? One can hardly fancy it. He would have felt that they were what he had chosen with Christ, instead of honour and comfort without Him. It would have seemed like complaining of the bargain he had made. I don't believe he can have: nor I won't. Mr. Cox was right, certainly; it comes easier at last to give in quietly from a sort of habit, like the broken colts he talked of that Christmas evening before uncle went away. I suppose Jeremiah meant the same when he said it was good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. I know, anyway, that without all that has happened to me since that day, I could not say those words he said then, and really mean it, too: 'Turn Thou me and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God.' He bent his head, adding low, in whispered prayer, "Teach me to turn willingly, my God, where Thou commandest me, and to be brave in bearing what comes to me."

He went downstairs, and met Mr. Maynard's look with a quiet, if not a cheerful, face, as he said, "Why, my boy, how long you have been dressing! I must not lose any of your company our last evening. I don't like to think of myself to-morrow at this time."

"Don't, Mr. Maynard: you will make me as bad again as I was."

"Why, have you grown already satisfied to run away from me?" his companion asked, as the boy seated himself by his knee, and drew his hand round his shoulder, as a fresh rush of affectionate feeling deepened his regret at the thought of leaving him in his weakness in his lonely home, haunted by such memories of grief as he had heard of to-day.

"No, indeed," he answered. "Not satisfied to leave you; only satisfied it is right not to be in a rage about it."

You see I do belong to papa, and so he has the right to order me home."

"Still remembering your picture's lesson, I see," Mr. Maynard answered: "of the One subject at Nazareth."

Hubert looked up quickly, saying, "Forgetting it rather, I think, sir, if you knew how hard it is to me not to hate the thought of going back."

"I have been writing to your father, remonstrating at the suddenness of the summons, and the shortness of your stay, and basing upon it my claim to have you back very soon: this is no visit. I have been looking over his letter again, and I have good hope, from what I gather from it, that I shall soon be allowed to have you again, and for as long as I wish."

Hubert's eyes were wide with amused surprise as he answered, "How can you guess all that from such a note, and not a single reason given in it?"

"It is just that very thing which makes me believe my surmise, as to the reason of your recall, to be correct. For my sake I hope it is. He says he is sorry to be *obliged* to do what looks like rudeness. So it is no mere whim."

"What do you think it is, then?"

"That I should not feel justified in saying. When you write and tell me what it is, I will tell you if my guess is correct. If it is we shall soon be together again. Most earnestly I trust it: you have been a great comfort to me for even these few days."

Hubert answered the words with a bright smile; then exclaimed, "Oh, but I say, there is that plan of my going abroad with papa when he goes!"

"There is the dinner bell," Mr. Maynard said, standing up, with a smile on his lips. "I don't think you need trouble yourself about that. If he goes I don't think he will take you with him."

Hubert marvelled, as he followed to the dining-room, where his friend had suddenly gained such power of prophecy;

but he let himself be cheered by the hopes thus raised ; and their parting next morning, though very painful to both, was made by them some degrees less so.

As the train neared the home station, his curiosity began to rise, and he looked out eagerly into the darkness, hoping that perchance his father might be there to meet him, if any cause had kept him driving late ; but there was only the coachman, who answered his inquiries, whether papa were in the carriage, with an odd sort of laugh, saying, No : he had just driven him to dine at Major Yorke's.

Hubert felt injured, and was turning to look for his portmanteau when Dr. Scott slapped him on the shoulder : " Why, Hubert, if I had known you had been my fellow-traveller I would have got in with you at Canworth. Your village has a special fancy for summoning me after dark. So you are just home in time. Rather took you by surprise : didn't it ? But it is the best thing he could have done, a long way."

" What, sir ? What do you mean ? He has told me nothing, except that he wanted me."

The Doctor whistled. " What would he have said to me if I had let it out ? Well, Hubert, when he does tell you, don't you vex him about it, even if you don't like the notion. He calls himself well, but he is not : a very little and we should have him as bad again as ever. That silly little sister of yours wrote, so as to upset him completely. Anything is better for you all than having him in the state he has been in the last two years. Don't stare so, or you will never shut your eyes again : it is nothing very dreadful. And I am sure that nothing will much vex you that will restore happiness and quietness of mind to him, and so, as I believe, restore him to health and strength. But come under the light, and let me look at you. Am I to have you as a patient at last ? or have you escaped me again ?"

Hubert moved after him, wondering what his words could mean, and stood to be looked at, trying to think what could

happen of any sort that could bring happiness back to his father. "Do tell me what you mean, Dr. Scott? Papa can't mind my knowing if May knows."

"He would mind my telling, though. Well, your old friend has taken good care of you, I see: red and brown back in your cheeks again. Sea and moors suit you better than darkened sick rooms. You are all right once more. How is he, poor old fellow?"

"He is just the same, only weak; but you are not to call him old. I don't believe he is as old as you are. I wish you would tell me: I am sure you might."

"No entreaties shall prevail with me after such impudence," said the laughing Doctor. "Come, now, and let me have a seat in the carriage, and save my old legs."

Finding no one to welcome him at home but the governess, and knowing by experience the lateness of his father's usual return when Major Yorke was his host, Hubert carried his sleepy head to his pillow early, and put off the solution of the mystery to the following morning. Then his first words were to ask the question, as his father caught him in his arms, and held him in a long embrace.

"Let me have my breakfast first, and you go down to yours,—dear son, how well you are looking!—and then come to the study, and you shall know all about it."

An answer which made the boy more curious than ever, as he noticed his father's nervous manner and anxious look at him. But his thoughts were suddenly turned off, his eye lighting on a name in the copy of the *Times*, lying on the table by him. He had looked down at it with his mind away; but now caught it up, exclaiming, "Oh, papa, have you seen this?"

"What? No: I have not looked at that yet. What is it? 'Naval intelligence,' I suppose. Why, Hu., nothing wrong, is there? Read."

And Hubert read: "'The Euphrosyne, double screw gun vessel, now in the dock at Keyham, is to be commissioned

on the 25th inst. for service on the west coast of Africa.' Then down here, 'The following appointments were made on Saturday, at the Admiralty: Commander Oswald A. Raymond to the Euphrosyne, when commissioned.' Oh, papa!"

"Well, Hubert, what of that? You frightened me. I expected you to read something dreadful. We shall hear it from himself soon. I wish, though, that it had been anywhere rather than to that coast."

"But, papa, how long has he been Commander?"

"Oh, didn't you know that? I thought I had told you. Does not Mr. Maynard take the *Times*?"

"Yes. But I never thought of looking at it up there. He must have missed seeing it."

"I meant to have written the news to you. He took the trouble of running up here from Portsmouth on purpose to tell us. He came the day you left. He was very vexed to find you gone: he told me to tell you so; but, I suppose, it slipped my memory. I am sorry, Hu.," Mr. Raymond said, grieved at his boy's look. "He'll be up again, no doubt, before he sails. He is off on a cruise somewhere just now: on a trial trip of one of these new vessels."

"Oh, is he? Well, I'll come and find you in the study, papa, after breakfast."

And Hubert left the room, his heart full. How little he had thought to have heard this news at second hand, or through a newspaper: the event they two had so often talked over beforehand! There was little doubt now that his day dream would have been fully realized, and that in another year his uncle's ship would have been his home. Now he might not even keep his long-standing promise, and be the first to write the new title, Captain Raymond: no doubt his father had already done it. And he had been home, and he had not seen him! still it was a relief to have missed him. And yet why had he left him that message?

Miss Sturt and Minnie thought their restored companion

added less to their amusement than they had expected he would.

He stood presently with his father alone, in the study window, and he began to realize that what he was about to hear was of greater moment than he had before imagined, as he watched his father's face in the pause he made, before beginning to speak.

"I hope you won't dislike it, Hu., as, I fear, my poor May does, from the tone of her letter. I have delayed telling you as long as might be, not to interfere with your freedom of enjoyment; but I could put it off no longer now, and I want you with me. You can't guess why?" he asked, banishing his uneasy look, and smiling at Hubert's face of questioning astonishment.

"No. What, papa? Mr. Maynard seemed to think he could; but he would not say what. And what he could guess from I am sure I don't know."

Mr. Raymond smiled again; but hesitated still, seeming to find the words he had to speak difficult to utter to the tall son at his side.

"I half wish I had written to you, now, Hu., as I did to Max. He takes it coolly, like everything else; not that I fancy you will so greatly dislike anything that I tell you is for me a great happiness, and will change the whole aspect of my life." Hubert looked up at him, with a dawning consciousness of what was coming. "And which I feel confident also," his father went on, "will make your's happier too; all of you. You will wish me joy, my boy, won't you, when I bring home to you one to take the place of the mother you have lost?"

Hubert stood staring at him: then asked, flushing over cheeks and brow, "Who is it? Not Miss Yorke?"

"And why not?" his father asked, gravely. While Hubert answered, with a deep breath, "Then uncle will never come home again, now, I know."

"Upon my word, Hubert!" his father exclaimed. "Have

you no thought in your head that is not joined to your uncle? Do you care for nothing but for the way that this will affect him? Have you nothing to say to me?"

"I beg your pardon, papa: I don't know what to say. It came into my head first."

"Just what I grumble at. Have you no care to wish me happiness, if your uncle's pleasure is not consulted?"

"Don't be cross with me, papa," Hubert said, kissing him shyly. "I am sure I hope you will like it."

His father laughed, turning round to him, saying, "That is a point upon which I have not the least doubt, thank you, Hu. How do you think you will? It will be a comfort past telling to feel such loving care round you all as she will give."

The boy answered eagerly, "I am sure that is not what we have wanted, with you to take care of us;" and looked away, with a sudden choking feeling in his throat at the remembrance of the one whose empty place was to be filled.

His father drew him towards him, holding him silently awhile, saying tenderly, as he saw him brush his hand across his eyes, "I don't ask you to like the thought of it yet; only try and love her for my sake, and be glad for my sake. It has brought me back happiness again."

Hubert remembered when his father had said that to him once before, and said, "But you were happy lately, papa,—you and I."

"Yes, my son, yes. You have been my greatest blessing. But you will know for yourself one day, I hope, that the love of his wife is the choicest treasure a man can have."

They talked long together after that; and by the time Hubert left the room, he had learned that his father's marriage was fixed for the Friday of that very week, and that he would go abroad at once.

"I would not have let you learn all this so suddenly," Mr. Raymond said, as his son stood up to go; "but it has all been settled so hurriedly; and I thought it kinder to you

to let you enjoy the sea and rocks with a mind undisturbed by the thought of home changes. It is very sudden, and, indeed, I hardly liked to ask it; but her beautiful self-forgetfulness shows itself in everything; and the Doctor thinking it right for me to go at once, she agreed without a thought for herself."

Hubert wondered why she should have been likely to object, but said nothing, supposing there might be difficulties in getting a wedding dress so quickly, and went away to finish his letter to Mr. Maynard. He had received permission to write the message, "Papa says I may go back to you as soon as you like to have me, if you still wish it; only he says he won't hear of your taking the trouble of teaching me, as you proposed in your note to him. He tells me to thank you for it: he was very pleased with it, and he will answer it himself after Friday. He is very busy just now, and writing makes his head ache."

As he wrote it he thought it strange that he should care so little for his granted wish; but the paragraph in the *Times*, and the thought of the Euphrosyne, had taken the shine off everything else. Still he was glad to go back. Uncle would not run up from Plymouth to Cumberland without warning. It made him grow hot and cold to think of seeing him appear before him suddenly.

The marriage took place two days later in a London Church, while a travelling carriage stood ready packed at the door; and then Hubert, with only one sight before his eyes,—his father, as he sank back in the corner of it, too suffering even to speak his farewells,—followed his clergyman uncle through the whirl of the noisy streets back to their hotel, and then drove with him to pay their promised visit to his sister and Geraldine, at their school.

The noise of their cab made talking difficult, as they went on mile after mile; and the bitter thoughts, wavering between regret and repining, which had filled his heart for the last two days, followed each other with no interruption, till the

large house, with its rows of horsechestnut trees in front, was reached. He was glad that Mr. Maxwell soon took them all out for a walk ; when, after a little, his good-natured sister, seeing his troubled unhappy look, let go his arm, to which she had been clinging in her delight at seeing him after their long separation, leaving him to Geraldine, the one more likely, as she knew, to receive his confidence, and went on to walk with her uncle, and submit to his attempts at reasoning her into liking a stepmother. It was no great chance of success that he had, after having made the admission that it was owing to his persuasion, during the visit at his Rectory, that her father had made up his mind to do what he had so long thought of.

To Hubert, May's vehemence and outspoken dislike were only worrying, seeming, as they did, to throw blame upon his father ; while she thought, by his downcast look, that he felt as she did. But his grief had a different cause from her indignation ; and Geraldine knew where to touch one half of it, at least, with her kind sympathy, as she said, in reply to his repeated description of his father's looks, " And it must have been bad for you to see him go with another to care for him instead of you, after you have been all to him for so long."

" Oh, I should think so ! and she doesn't know how. She talks to him, and says things he is obliged to answer. I longed to jump into the carriage, and drive away with him somewhere alone. The journey the day before had tired him so dreadfully. He was as white as a sheet by the time we reached the Church, and could hardly stand through the service, though Uncle Colin made it as short as he could, and cut off all the rules for husbands and wives at the end. I'll answer for it, though, he knows his part without hearing them again. I only hope she does. Oh, poor dear old daddy !"

Geraldine laughed. " Really, Hu., I pity her, with such a couple of step children as you and May are. I have been

spending my breath in vain during the last fortnight, reasoning May out of her frantic state."

"It is not that, Gerry. I don't mind it in that way; but I cannot bear losing him like this. If you had only seen him this morning. He would never even have been able to bear the service if I had not made Uncle Colin get them all out of the vestry, and leave us alone for a quarter of an hour. Miss Yorke did not look as if she loved me the better for it; but it drove me mad to see him made ten times worse by the buzzing and talking."

"Then you had a few minutes alone with him? I am glad of that, for Maxwell said he could not even say goodbye."

"Not to him and the others; but Uncle Colin kept them all talking in the Church, and would not let them come near us, till the quiet had made him a little better. We had our goodbye in the vestry," Hubert added, with a shaking voice; then went on, with a sigh: "I wonder how he is now? I am thankful Foster is with him. I told him to write this evening to me."

"I do not doubt but that he will be better now," Geraldine said: "as that it is all over; and he has nothing else to think of, but to get strong."

"Yes, perhaps," said Hubert: "Dr. Scott says so. But though that is a comfort to think of for him, it doesn't change the fact that I have lost him. He and I have been nearly alone together for a year, and now what will he want with me? I might just as well be anywhere else." The last words came out with bitter impetuosity.

Geraldine looked round at him quickly, as he stamped along the road,—understanding then the second half, and the greater cause of his sorrow; but her sympathy could bring no comfort there, for she was ignorant now of his life, except from his letters, so that her words only gave pain.

"Ah," she said, speaking her first thought: "how very nice it would be if they would admit boys into the navy above fourteen; and then you could have had the happiness

of being all this time with dear Mr. Raymond, and now you could go off and join your uncle in his new ship. Has he sent you a sketch of her?"

She was startled by his sudden answer. "Oh, don't Geraldine: you don't know! Why didn't Uncle Colin speak about this to papa a year ago. But for mercy's sake let us talk of something else."

The girl was grieved for him, thinking surely May must have been right in her old supposition, that he repented the choice he had made. But she thought it kinder to drop the subject, and do as he said; and she soon made him tell her the story of his Cumberland visit, and could but hope, as he described his pleasures there, that a return to them would make him once more forget his troubles.

May's last piece of advice to him was to get Mr. Maynard to let him live with him altogether, as he was so fond of him, and home would be unendurable now. "As for me, I only hope Colonel Dennis may ask Gerry and me to spend the next holidays in Germany, as he did the last; for I declare I won't go home and have to stand seeing Miss Yorke touch *my* teapot."

"You had better use the next month to make up your mind to it, May," her brother counselled, as he wished her goodbye. "It always saves trouble in the end to give in quietly when a thing has to be; and papa likes it."

"That is right, Hubert," said Mr. Maxwell. "You are a good boy, and care more for your father's happiness than your own wishes. I am vexed with you, May, going on like this."

"Don't scold her, Uncle Colin: she only talks like that about her teapot for joke. It is worse for her than for me."

"Well, I hope it is only joke. But if you behave, May, as your words lead me to fear you are preparing to do, you are little likely to win such a blessing, my dear, as I heard given to your brother in the vestry this morning: a remem-

brance worth possessing, if he never saw his father again to receive another."

May's eyes were glistening; but she shook her head at him, laughing, saying, "Well, I know our other uncle will side with me, anyway. He could never bear her; and with good reason, I see now. I know *he* will never let her pour out his tea in papa's house."

"Then let him go without it," said Mr. Maxwell, testily; "for in that case he must be as silly as you are. Come, Hubert."

And he went off; Geraldine assuring him that he need not be troubled about May; that she would cure her before the Christmas holidays, in time to go home in a dutiful frame of mind..



CHAPTER XXIV.

SUBMISSION LEARNT.

I work my work. All its results are Thine.
I know the loyal deeds become a fact
Which Thou wilt deal with ; nor will I repine,
Although I miss the value of the act.

THE winter that year came in with great suddenness, and with a severity felt doubly in the north, and in a situation so exposed as that occupied by Mr. Maynard's house. The winds howled round it ; and as Hubert lay listening to it, night after night, he no longer wondered at the many appliances, which had so amused him at first, for keeping doors and windows tightly closed against it.

It was an entertaining novelty for him to see the hills in the distance covered thick with snow, and to break the crust of ice upon the water in his bath every morning ; even though the last sight at night had been the flicker of the flames from his fire. But to Mr. Maynard the cold brought suffering ; and no care seemed to avail to shield him from it. Curtains were doubled, and windows padded ; but always more and more he crouched over the fire, and looked, to Hubert's eyes, more shrivelled and blue every day. Since the north and east winds had blown, he had remained altogether within doors ; and the boy often wondered how he could exist in the heated air of his room, which, to him, felt suffocating, as he came in glowing with

exercise. But still he only thought it his way: he was always fonder of fires than other people; and he quieted himself, when a feeling of uneasiness passed through his mind as he took one of the stony-cold hands to rub between his own and saw how wonderfully thin it had grown, with the thought that he would be all right again when the spring came back. He was well content to know that there was no fear of his being called upon to leave him before then. His father wrote that he meant to spend the rest of the winter abroad, and was only too well pleased for him to be where he was; and for himself he had no wish to change the life he was leading for any other that he could have. Yet he was not happy, and Mr. Maynard saw it.

"Hubert, have you seen the *Illustrated* anywhere?" he asked, one evening. "Leigh cannot find it; and I have not looked at it yet."

"Oh, I didn't know that: I am sorry! I took it to my room."

"What were you doing with it there?" Mr. Maynard asked, as he brought it to him. "You don't sit up reading at night, I hope?"

"No: I was only copying a drawing in it before I went out."

"It is too cold in your room for you. You might just as well sit downstairs to draw. Which was it? Is there anything good this time?"

"Nothing particular. They are exhausted, I suppose, after their Christmas number, and so give us a dull one for the new year," Hubert said; and adding something about finishing some work for the next day, left the room.

He was late in returning for the hour's reading, to which he usually looked forward, for Mr. Maynard was taking him through a course of the English poets, and opened his volume of Coleridge with an unusual air of listlessness.

The day had been a gloomy one,—the coast and hills enveloped in a thick mist; and the boy's face looked as

though still reflecting in the bright warm room what had been all day before his eyes.

"What is the name of your uncle's ship? The Euphrosyne, is it not?" Mr. Maynard asked, as he was finding his place. He would never humour Hubert's sensitiveness by avoiding the name he shrank from hearing. He answered, colouring, knowing the reason of the question; and Mr. Maynard went on: "Let me see the copy you have made. I cannot say I think these iron vessels picturesque."

"They draw them so stupidly in the *Illustrated*," Hubert said: "always as if they were lying in harbour."

"Well, let me see what you have made of it." And unwillingly enough the drawing was fetched. "How very pretty, Hubert!" was his companion's pleased comment; looking up at him, as he stood beside his chair. "I did not know you could draw as well as this. Where did you learn this way of using grey and black? What do you use?"

"Lamp black and neutral tint; and then white for the lights. It is a way he taught me. I like much better to paint a ship moving than quiet."

His picture was a moonlight scene: a fresh breeze was curling the waves, and the vessel was running towards the horizon.

"I hope you are sure you have put in these extra sails correctly. Are you sure they are right?" Mr. Maynard asked, comparing the print with the drawing.

"Oh, of course they are right: he taught me all that ages ago."

And taking back the drawing block, he sat down to read; Mr. Maynard seeing plainly enough that the beauties of Coleridge were all lost upon him. But he took no notice, and interrupted with none of his usual remarks, sitting with his head on his hand by the fireside, listening to the monotonous reading, paying not much more attention to it than the reader, till a change in the voice made him lift his

eyes ; and he saw the boy's face flushing, as he read of Roland and Sir Leoline :—

“ Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother :
They parted,—ne'er to meet again.
But neither ever found another
To free the hollow heart from paining :
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder.
A dreary sea now flows between ;
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.”

The latter lines were nearly lost in the effort he made to control his voice ; and as it failed him entirely at the end, he flung down the book, with an energetic, “ Oh, bother ! ” stood up hastily, and left the room.

Mr. Maynard heard the direction taken by the running feet from the door ; and presently rose to follow him to the room where he spent much of his time during the day, and there found him kneeling over the nearly-extinguished fire. He started up at his approach, exclaiming, at his leaving his warm room, “ Do go back, sir ! ”

“ Yes, when you come. But there is no reason we should occupy separate rooms in the evening. I am only sorry my salamander nature makes it better for you in the day. Are you coming back ? or must I sit and shiver ? ”

“ Oh, do you go ! I'll come soon.”

“ No : I cannot allow you to stay crying alone like this. Come, be a wise boy, and tell me what is troubling you so. Surely grief shared is lightened ; and you have been hiding yours for months.”

“ I don't see that things that make one unhappy can ever be shared : sharing is dividing. Go back, Mr. Maynard : you must not stay in here. I don't see the good of bothering other people with what bothers oneself. It is no more getting rid of any part of one's own share, than the flame of a candle

does when you light another from it. It must go on the same ; there is no use talking about it. You said yourself I should never be worth anything if I could not hide when I was unhappy. I do generally ; but I can't always. Why need the old stupid go and write poetry about things like that ? ”

His words were interrupted by checked sobs ; and Mr. Maynard said, “ If sharing grief may not make it less, it surely helps one to bear it. It distresses me to see you like this. Tell me what is the matter with you. Did anything happen fresh about your uncle when you were home for your father's marriage ? ”

Hubert shook his head with an “ Oh, no ! ” and remained silent.

“ When did I tell you to hide unhappiness ? ” Mr. Maynard went on. “ I am very sure if I did I never meant you to hide it from me. I must say to you, as you were reading in Hamlet the other night, ‘ You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend. ’ What is the use of a friend, but to sympathize with one's sorrows ? ”

“ I hope of some other use than that, sir ; or I must be a very useless one, I am sure. It is a use you have never put me to. I have always remembered what you said, because I knew it was what you did. I think it is much more manly to be quiet about a thing when it can't be altered. I am only sorry I have been so foolish about it now ; but I couldn't help it. ”

His companion said nothing, and they returned together to their former seats, where he sat silent, leaning back, recovering slowly from the exertion of moving ; while Hubert watched him uneasily, surprised at the look of faintness and exhaustion which succeeded.

“ Mr. Maynard, are you sure you are not growing worse ? ” he asked, after a while. “ How can taking so few steps tire you so ? Ought you not to see the Doctor ? ”

"I did see him, in the Christmas week, while you were at home," was the answer.

"Why, you never told me that. What did he say?" the boy asked, eagerly. "Did he not say you ought to take more wine? Let me get you a glass now."

"He did not say it would do me much good. No, thank you. I am rested now. Hubert, I have been thinking of what you were saying just now. It is hardly fair, certainly, to expect confidence to be given on the one side, if it is withheld on the other."

"No, no," Hubert said: "I didn't mean that. Of course you don't tell me things. I was only meaning that it was more manly when anyone could hide what they were feeling, as you always did."

"In some cases it is very needful, if a man wishes to be strong for work; and sympathy claimed is sometimes only because weakness shrinks from suffering alone. In other cases it is only pride which keeps pain concealed; and the real proof of strength would be to bear to speak of it. But I don't think I have treated you fairly: a friend is entitled, by his standing as friend, to know the one he loves. I have asked from you both proofs of friendship,—confidence as well as love; and I have only given you one in return. I will claim your confidence when I have given you mine. You are no child now, and have thought and suffered too; and in all the world you are the only one I have to love, or who loves me."

"And that is what I do with all my heart. And I'll tell you anything you like in a minute, if you really wish me to; though, really, it is nothing particular I have to tell you." He bent forward over the fire as he spoke; adding low, and slowly, as if it were painful to him to put the truth into words, "It is only the horrible feeling that it has all been for no use. While I was feeling I was being what papa wanted, I could bear it; but now what is the good of it all? I have lost all the happiness of my whole life for the sake

of—I declare I might say, Nothing; for if I had gone the autumn before last, he would only have married a year sooner. I know, now, uncle thought so, by a letter of his I was looking at the other day, where he told me I was not to do what I have done, for that papa would soon be comforted if I left him. Oh, if he had only written it plainer! But you see I never dreamed of such a thing as his marrying again, after having had our mother for his wife; though May says she did. If only he wanted me still, I could go on as I was. I was able to feel right about it then,—above all, when he was so ill; but now I might be on the Euphrosyne, or anywhere, and it would make not a fig of difference to him. And when I think that it was for his sake that I have lost all that,—and, worst of all, uncle, and for ever,—I don't know what to do with myself. It drives me mad to think of it; and yet I can never keep it out of my head."

Mr. Maynard had listened to him gravely, with his chin in his hand, his eyes fixed on the sad vexed-looking face, over which the firelight was playing; and his only comment at first, when he had finished speaking, was, "Ah, poor Hubert!" adding half to himself, after a minute, "The pain of repentance: there is none greater; and greatest when there is no remedy."

"What do you mean, sir? I don't think I have done anything to repent of in it. I meant to do right when I did it."

"Why connect the word with wrong-doing instantly? What does it mean?"

"To turn from one way to another, of course."

His companion shook his head. "Would that it were. True, that may often be one of the two parts in the act of repentance. First, the turning of the will; then the forsaking one path for another: sometimes, and too often, for peace, the latter is no longer possible; the path entered must be walked in to the end." Then looking dreamily into the

fire, he added again, speaking more to himself than to the boy, "Except when a new way is opened before the aching feet, and the repentant heart may see light at the end of it, as bright as though the darkness of the self-made path had never been entered." He sank his head into his hand, and Hubert thought he caught the words, "Marvel of grace,—the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

As the silence lasted long, he had time for his own thoughts. "The pain of repentance," he repeated to himself; "that was what uncle prophesied for Maude, or for either of ourselves, if we disobeyed willingly. What makes Mr. Maynard think that about me? It was just that I was so afraid of." He looked up presently, and met the sunken eyes resting on him again, "Why did you begin talking about repenting to me, sir?" he asked.

"Very naturally, Hubert. Have you not just told me that you have been doing it ever since your father's marriage?"

"Repenting?"

"Yes: turning your will the other way from what it has led you. Though I remember how you looked when you told me one day you never should." Hubert remembered, too, and started; and Mr. Maynard, seeing it, said, taking his hand between his own, with earnestness deepening his voice, and using the name he every now and then gave to him when anything had troubled him, "My son, to mourn as you are doing the consequences of an act, is to wish it undone: practically, to turn your will from your own deed, and to say, if it were to do again I would not do it; as I say, day by day: that is repentance. Any events of the future can have no effect upon the duty of the present, and of the imperative nature of that you were convinced that autumn. Is not the source of your trouble repentance? You say 'It was for his sake I have lost all.' Your father told me the autumn before last that you had said to him you had not done it for his sake. I thought it was for the sake of One loved more than him:

One who has said, 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' To repent of having walked in God's way is to wish you had walked in the devil's; as to repent of having walked in the devil's is to wish you had walked in the way of God." Hubert's eyes filled as he sat looking into the fire; and Mr. Maynard, as he saw them glistening, added, "Be wise: rest in peace, if you are only sure that each step of life is taken as the Lord commands, be the consequences what they may; and be as careful as you were to take them, never to repent them,—which is mentally to untake them, and to will a disobedience you have no power to commit. Do you remember that chart you once made, and the crown you drew as the emblem of the Christian's hope? That is not promised for single or spasmodic acts of devotion. The Lord's words are, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' I know that is your loadstone, Hubert, and that you are true to it in faithful obedience to Him who has died to give us life and perfection of holiness. But just as you can make the compass-needle quiver and turn with feeble-looking indecision, by holding steel near it, so you give yourself all the misery of wavering if you put any other object as the moving cause of your acts instead of that one great one. No changes in your life can change the worth of acts marked with the seal He will honour hereafter: 'For the sake of Christ.'"

Again the silence was only broken by the snapping of the fire; till Mr. Maynard said, speaking faintly, "I had meant to pay you my debt, and tell you something of my own life to-night; but I cannot. I am not feeling well, and must go and lie down. Will you ring for Leigh, and send him to me?"

Hubert helped him to his room, sent his man to him, and went upstairs, where, by his own fireside, those three words, "For His sake," formed the text of his thoughts; and by the time he put his head upon his pillow, and lay still in the darkness, listening to the winter rain dashing

against his window, and the driving, roaring wind shaking its thick oak frame, he could think of his father's love satisfied elsewhere, and himself no longer needed; and say again, with quietness of heart, as he had said to him a year ago, "No: it was not for his sake I sacrificed it." The words of his heavenly Master, just read in his little book, repeated themselves with a comfort he would otherwise not have taken from them: "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your joy no man taketh from you."

Mr. Maynard saw that the secret of his impatient grief had been touched and healed, when, a few days later, he called him into his room, to give him some sketches of the first vessel in which Oswald had sailed, and which he had saved for him from among the destruction of his old letters. He took them with pleased thanks, saying, cheerfully, that he would make a large drawing from them; and that would make the set complete of every one he had sailed in.

With the sketches he received a sealed envelope, directed to his uncle, with the injunction, "Give this yourself to him, when you next see him; but if he is to be away for years, send it to him. I would not have him miss having it on any account, for his own sake. Promise me, Hubert, you will give it to himself, if you can, or make sure that he has it somehow else, if you cannot."

The promise was given, with the question, "How soon may I do it?"

"Anytime after you go home."

And Hubert asked no more, shrinking with fear lest plainer words might be added, to specify the limit of the time he must keep it; the truth having begun to dawn upon him now, that when he did go home it would be because he should be no longer needed where he was.

As the days passed by he could not any more delude himself that the spring weather would have power to give back strength to his dying friend; for it was so that he was, gradually learning to think of him.

Mr. Maynard, as he met his look fixed on him so often when he thought himself unnoticed, and as he received from him all the solicitous attentions which he seemed jealous of anyone else offering, felt thankful to believe the truth known, which he had shrunk from being the one to communicate. Still though known, he saw that the boy only thought of a sorrow as yet distant,—talking of what they should do in spring and summer ; while he knew himself that nothing less than a miracle would let him see again the young shoots upon the fir trees.

The days went on so placidly,—no sudden change in his state to mark his failing,—that it was no wonder that Hubert, always near him, little heeded those which came so gradually. It was only when a sudden recollection startled him, as when he dated some incident by the reminder, “It was when you came down the last time to lunch,” or “The last time I did my Greek with you,” that he realized painfully how old habits and employments were dropping off one by one, and how the waning life was withdrawing more and more within the four walls where it must end.

February had given place to March ; and Hubert might have dated with the words, “The day when you last left your room,” when one night Mr. Maynard called him back, after he had said Good night to him, and asked him, for the first time, if he would read a chapter from the Bible for him before he went. “It tires me now to fix my eyes. And read very slowly, or I cannot follow.”

The boy obeyed, saying, “I do not think I shall bring you my work any more to look over : I am afraid that tired you this morning, and that I went on too fast reading.”

“Your speed in that is less tiring to me than it would be in this, dear boy. I know Horace by heart nearly, and this, I grieve to say, so little. But I was thinking to-day that I must tell you that I must let you work alone for the future, till you can go back to other hands. You need not be too strict about the time you give to it for a little while now.

I shall like you with me all I can have you. Will you read?"

Hubert cleared his throat, and tried to begin; but it was not easy after such an introduction.

"Wait awhile," his companion said. "I might just as well have said that afterwards as before. Or should you mind fetching your verse book? I could listen more easily to that,—one connected thought; and it stays by a weakened memory better."

With quietness regained in his run upstairs, Hubert opened his book and read: first from Leviticus. "If ye will walk contrary unto Me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and I will punish you yet seven times for all your sins.—If they shall confess that they have walked contrary unto Me and that I also have walked contrary unto them; if they then accept the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant. I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God." Then from Hebrews the record of the new covenant was read. "This is the covenant that I will make with them, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Both passages were asked for and repeated several times, Mr. Maynard saying, as he rested back in his chair with his eyes closed, "One can never tell in how many unexpected ways one's wrong-doing brings retribution. I would give anything, many a time, for the remembrance of such words as those, and my memory cannot hold them, because they were neglected in strength, while an ode of Horace or long passages from Shakespeare will seem to repeat themselves without my will, till I am wearied of them. But it is just: thank God, I can hold the memory of the truths though the words will not come. Will you repeat it once again? You have chosen well."

Hubert did so, wondering at the humble, self-blaming

words from one whom it was always difficult to him to think of otherwise than as shut up in the silence of his proud reserve. He was still more startled as he heard him begin as his own voice was silent, speaking low and slowly, with his hands clasped upon his knee. "Contrary to God indeed have I walked, and He has walked contrary to me, aye, for long years; so do I confess it, and accept as just the punishment of my iniquity. Remember, O Lord, to me Thy covenant. Fulfil Thy words for me: 'I will not cast them away neither abhor them:' remember it to me. 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'"

Again and again the last words were said; then he asked, "Are there not some words that come after those, about boldness and assurance of faith?"

Hubert turned to the place in the Bible and read, "Having boldness therefore to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: for He is faithful that promised."

Again the last words were repeated many times. "Yes, He is faithful. He has been faithful in sending the promised evil; He will be faithful equally in keeping the covenant of mercy, and I will have boldness therefore to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

Hubert listened to his words in thankful wonder, sitting by him in silence. After a long pause he turned to him saying, "I was saying just now how unexpected the results of our wrong-doing often are: just as I never thought in the days when I neglected God's written Word, that the time would come when I should long and long for it, and, with no strength to read it, must lie perforce and listen instead to the words of a heathen writer; but the results of a man's right-doing are just as unexpected. You little think, I am sure, that your consistent course of obedience was what first led

me to believe in that very truth you have been reading to me to night,—that God must put His laws in our hearts and write them in our minds by His Spirit, if we are to be made partakers in His covenant of life. Men are willing enough to believe the latter half,—‘their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;’ who will not admit the need of the first—the renewal of the will of man. For myself, I believed neither: forgiveness I could not believe in, while I was conscious that punishment was pursuing me, and the need of a change of heart was a doctrine I had thought held only by weak-minded enthusiasts.”

“Oh, Mr. Maynard, and you knew uncle did!” Hubert exclaimed.

“Will you forgive me,” Mr. Maynard asked with a smile, “if I say I thought him one: not weak-minded, that I knew he was not, but an enthusiast.”

“I know you don’t think him so now,” Hubert said, “so I will: but don’t talk any more now, you look very tired.”

“Yes, I am, but I want to say this to you now while I have it in mind. My long loneliness and habits of silence for so many years, make it an effort to me to begin speaking of myself even with you; and I think it will be a pleasure to you when I am gone from you, to know that though unconsciously, it was you who first brought my proud, unbelieving mind to admit the truth, that it is not individual acts of sin which ruin a man (*that* I granted), but that the essence of sin is the alienation of the will from God: it is that which divides us from Him and bars us from good for eternity. When I saw you obedient to laws you had scouted before without thought or care, because obedience was your wish, owning frankly your hope of perfection hereafter, returning to the same way of self-denial and thoughtfulness for right after every lapse from it, with only renewed zeal and more hopeful determination, with no ignorant dream of winning salvation at the end, but knowing that was assured to you by the Saviour you were serving, I could but believe

that the change in you was the work of God, and that the figure 'to be born again' was no forced one for that change which is made in a man when the will is renewed, God's law written in the heart."

He paused a little, Hubert, astonished at his words, not venturing to interrupt him, and then went on: "My whole being had always revolted against the doctrine of the sinful nature of man, and of the need of conversion of heart; while I had mourned over one terrible sin for a dozen years, with a vague hope that the heavy sorrows which fell upon me one after another, would satisfy the justice of an offended God, and that the mercy I had been taught to believe in all my life might in the next world be extended to me. Your changed life set me thinking. I watched you carefully: I began to doubt my own disbelief, and that perchance beyond one great sin, I had to mourn before God a heart at enmity to Him, alien from His will. Of the desires you confessed I knew nothing, and though I had met men who professed the same, I doubted either their strength of mind or their sincerity; yours I was quite sure of, while the change in you was perhaps more seen by me than by anyone else."

Hubert interrupted him. "Mr. Maynard, I will say it now, I have been wanting so often to tell you right out, how very, very sorry, I am now for the abominable way I used to behave to you: it makes me hot all over even to think of it when I look at you."

"You have no need, no need: your acts have said it long, and the fault was not all on one side. You were but a child. Ah, Hubert, if wrong-doing to a fellow-creature can cause shame in the remembrance when the feeling towards him is changed, what amount of it will overwhelm us when we stand before Him we love, and look back then! God grant that memory may cease, for its burden is intolerable, even when pardon has been granted."

He turned his face into the corner of his armchair with a deep groan, and the boy, much troubled, took hold of his

hand, saying, "Oh don't, dear Mr. Maynard! It will be impossible to be unhappy then, so we shan't have the power of feeling shame. You have just done yourself up with talking. I shall call Leigh: you are too tired to stay up longer."

"Wait one minute:" and again the wearied, wan looking face was turned to him. "Do you remember my promise, that I would give you my confidence, and tell you of that in my life you do not yet know?"

"I have sometimes thought of it," Hubert said, standing up as if ready to go; "but I never want you to keep it: it would only make you unhappy. I know more than you think I do," he added, hesitatingly, "and I don't see really why you should be so angry with yourself for an accident."

"An accident!" Mr. Maynard repeated slowly, still holding his hand and looking up at him from under his heavy brows. "Old Thomas told you, I suppose?" and he shivered. "What did he tell you?" and as Hubert hesitated, he repeated impatiently, "What was it? Tell me: I will have you know the truth."

"Only that your boat was upset, and the poor children were drowned, and your best friend," the boy answered, feeling fascinated under that fixed look, and forced to speak.

Mr. Maynard breathed hard, then said, "If that friend,—you say right in calling him my best, he was as my brother,—if that friend had lived I should never have had my wife. We were sailing to meet her,—he, Kenneth, and I. I knew that he would ask her that day to be his, and I knew that she would be so. Months of jealousy had changed my love of him to hatred: he never knew it, though he knew me changed. I was too proud to let him see that I was hopelessly coveting what he had so easily won, and what I deemed him the only obstacle to my possessing. The wind was fresh,—too fresh I judged to take my delicate sister; but she stood on the end of the jetty pleading to come.

He was fond of the child, and urged me to turn the boat and take her in. I refused ; and he persisted, half in fun, half in earnest, laughing in his happiness, while my heart was bitter with misery. It ended by his pushing me from my post at the tiller. I let him. I knew he could not swim : Kenneth and I could. The boat turned over next minute : the rest you know. Lilian was not drowned : she fell in her terror. I reached her, but her head had struck a rock. The waves were too strong for Kenneth to battle with."

He had spoken word after word firmly, with no change of tone, and without moving. Now he dropped Hubert's hand, and with a deep sigh said faintly, "At last it is done : I am thankful. I could not die without telling you. It is that which is killing me : twelve years of torturing remorse. It was determination to have what God had not meant for me that did it all. Oh, to have given it up at first, and kept peace, and my little ones saved to me. Kenneth, Lilian!"—he lingered over the words ; then added, leaning back again, "I shall soon see you again now : forgiven at last out of the fulness of the mercy of God.

"Hubert, my son, can you wonder that I shrank from the thought of seeing self-will master you? You can never tell where that ends ; and self-will so gained is a very apple of Sodom. I married the woman I loved : she pitied, and then loved me. She was a suffering invalid during the two and half years she stayed with me. Our son was taken from me a few weeks before she was. Loss of my property soon after involved separation from my other child ; and her end you know. I was afraid to let myself love you, Hubert, for fear of bringing my doom upon you ; but, you see, I could not help it after all. Blessing returned to me first through you ; and since then many undeserved have been added." He held out his arms to him, and the boy bent down to him, tears of compassion filling his eyes.

"You will never repent your son-like care and kindness to me," he went on, as he held him close ; "even though

shown to me, the very least of His brethren. He will bless you for it as done to Him. Good night, my son. Whenever you are tempted to mourn over the sorrows which yielding to the will of God has brought to you, remember me, and those which refusing to do so brought to me; for years I have heard those haunting words, 'Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.'"

"It was not like that. You are not to call yourself that," Hubert cried. "It was not you that did it. If you had steered still they would all have been safe. You did not do it."

"True, true: but I did not prevent it. I have tried all that sophistry hundreds of times. But 'Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer;' and I hated him, and wished him — But I cannot talk of him. I had loved him, Hubert, as you love Oswald; and do so now. Remorse cannot live in the Saviour's presence; and rest is drawing nearer now day by day. The words that first stilled those that haunted me, were some you spoke to me one night: 'The pure in heart are those whom Christ makes pure; and those shall see God.' Little did I ever dream to be able to say with you, 'I know that when He shall appear I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is,' having boldness to enter in purified by the blood of Jesus."

His head sank as he ceased speaking; and Hubert, in terror at his look, sprang to the bell, and stood beside him, supporting him till his servant came to them, reassuring the frightened boy by saying, "It is only faintness, sir; but he is getting very much weaker, and it is more difficult to bring him round. I wish you could get him to let you write to some relation to come to him."

"He says there is no one. I have asked him before now," Hubert answered, when they had laid him on his bed, and stood beside him watching. "He says there is no one he wishes to see."

As he revived sufficiently to take the restoratives the

servant gave into Hubert's hand, Mr. Maynard confirmed his words, looking up at him with a feeble smile, saying, "No : I want no one near me but you. My lawyer knows my relations ; but I do not want to see them. Promise you will not leave me."

And Hubert promised, "No : I never will."

After that day his strength failed fast : he soon could no longer bear the fatigue of moving to his chair, but lay propped up with pillows, often silent for hours ; but sometimes entertaining Hubert with stories of his young days, and talking of the past with a freedom and pleasure in lingering over its memories, that seemed to show how great the relief had been to him in breaking through the ice of his long reserve.

Hubert could hardly believe him to be the same man in his state of gentle dependence ; and his love to him increased, as his grief did, in the thought that he must lose him. He questioned the doctor, who came at intervals, if there were the least hope for him, and got the decided answer, "All the doctors in England could not add a day to his life ; and you may count what remains to him now by days."

After that Hubert resigned himself to his coming loss. Nothing came to interrupt the quiet monotony of those last weeks, except a visit from the clergyman, which greatly tried the dying man, recalling the time of despair that he had passed with him, and claiming his weakened powers of attention ; so it was not repeated. And Hubert felt strangely alone with the solemn feeling upon him that they two were shut together there, waiting for death to join them and carry one away.

It came at last, after a long day and night of such distress and suffering, with faintness and breathlessness, that as he heard the last sigh drawn upon his shoulder and felt the heavier pressure upon his supporting arm, he laid the dead head down upon the pillow with no feeling in his heart but solemn thankfulness, and kissed the cold lips, glad to

feel that no more prayers for forgiveness would ever pass them again ; and that the names Kenneth, Lilian, Frank, so continually upon them lately in half-consciousness, would be spoken next in joy. He could shed no tears for him then, turning from the bedside, he said quietly to the weeping servant, "I think we ought to feel more thankful for him than sorry. It is such comfort to know that we cannot see him suffer any more." And worn out with anxiety and watching he went to his room, and lay in heavy sleep until a second morning dawned.

Many kind offers were sent to him in the course of the day from neighbours round, asking him to leave the house till the day of the funeral ; but he had no wish to give up his place as mourner. He passed much of the few days that remained to him in sorrowful revisiting, before leaving them for good, his favourite haunts of the last six months. Very sad and grieving, he found a satisfaction in the solitude of those silent days, and felt anything but pleased when it was broken in upon by the arrival of a young man who announced himself as Mr. Maynard's nephew, and who, on his first appearance, Hubert had taken for a groom. He said he had come down for the funeral ; but the way in which he walked about the place, examining everything, led to strong surmise that something besides respect for an uncle, for whom he expressed little, had brought him there. Much to Hubert's relief, he refused his proposal that a bedroom should be prepared for him, saying, that under the circumstances he preferred the village inn. But he made a survey of all the lower rooms with the air of a master taking possession, greatly to the disgust of the boy who followed his steps, his indignation reaching its height when they came to the library, Mr. Maynard's pride. It was not large, but filled with a choice collection of books ; and there the comment was, "I wonder what all this lot would fetch. One could turn out the bookcases and make it into a billiard room in no time."

"This was his favourite room," Hubert said, indignantly.

"And so it would be mine," the other said, with a laugh, so offending to Hubert that he turned away and left him, sending Leigh to him, with the injunction to let him know when "that insufferable man was gone."

He was glad now that an early day had been fixed for the funeral. He could not bear to look at that quiet face upstairs, and then go down to meet the other, who was to take its place in those rooms that had grown lately to feel so like home to him. And he wrote to his father that he should leave directly after the funeral; though the afternoon train would bring him in at an unreasonable hour of the night. But he was longing to be home, and would not stay to be the guest of the new comer.

When the time was come that he must take his last farewell look, his heart quite failed him; and he found it hard to control himself during the long drive to the distant Church, and welcomed the presence of his lawyer companion in the carriage, ensuring silence from the other. It was he who, on their return, stopped him, as he was going upstairs, saying, "Come with us into the dining room. I am going to read the will."

"Oh, thank you: I don't care to," Hubert said. "He told me I might have his watch and ring, and a few books he wrote my name in. I have to finish putting my things up."

The lawyer looked hard at him, and said, "You had better come in, I think."

And Hubert, supposing that to listen to a will might be some proper mark of respect, followed him.

The room looked half filled with the funeral guests, distant relations, or neighbours who had known his lost friend from boyhood; and after a hasty greeting of those he knew, he went into one of the windows, trying to keep his composure, which every remembrance upset afresh. He was longing to get away by himself; and he stood with clasped hands, watching the sparkling water below him, only bent on hiding

any show of feeling till he could escape. Presently the name Hubert Cameron Raymond, repeated more than once by the reader, caught his ear; but he did not take in what followed, and supposing the gifts to him were being enumerated, went back to his own thoughts, when his uncle's name, connected with the word trustee and a thousand pounds, again made him look round, hearing then his father's, and a list of valuable books. Other names and legacies followed; and he was wondering whether he might go, when the reading ceased and the voice of his late companion broke in with loud tones.

"And who are these Raymonds, I should like to know, ousting a man from his rights?" with more violent words following.

And Hubert turned again, listening in wonder, when the clergyman rose from his chair, saying, "This is unseemly language, sir. I only know one of them, and he is here. Except for him, my old friend would have died untended, but by servants. He has devoted himself to him as a son, and was the only one, as he said to me himself, who would shed a tear over his grave. The truth of his words we saw to-day, I think." Coming round to where Hubert was standing, he held out his hand, saying, "Let me say to you I am glad he has done this."

And as the boy looked at him, asking, "What?" the lawyer turned to him, and said, "He does not understand," not heeding the mocking words, "That is remarkably likely. What else was he here for?" and went on: "You should have attended to what I was reading, and then you would know that you are the owner not only of his watch and ring, as remembrances of your friend, but of his house, lands, and property,—everything which was his, saving such monies and articles as are specified in the will I have just read, and which, it may satisfy some here to know, was signed and put into my keeping before you ever set foot inside this house. His words to me were, that he had placed you in

the position his son would have held ; no one else in the world having the slightest claim upon him." The last words were spoken with a glance at the angry nephew. "Here are his keys. He told me to tell you that you will find a letter to yourself in his desk."

Hubert took them, staring at him, too much astonished to speak for a few moments ; then, as this crowning proof of the love he had lost was understood, the tears rushed to his eyes, and with one quick look round the room, he made for the door, and escaped.

He was driven away an hour later ; and as he gave his parting glance to the grey weather-stained walls, carefully-sheltered garden, fir woods, and brown cliffs, it was not with the sorrowful regret he had thought to have felt, but with a sudden smile of hearty pleasure in the first realized sense of possession, as he remembered his right to return to them, and wondered, "What will papa and uncle say ?"



CHAPTER XXV.

UNITED.

“Whom have we, Lord, in heaven, but Thee !
Like ships safe moored on stormy sea,
Our souls in peril, with Thee there
Find anchorage of hope and prayer.”

“**W**HAT news of baby : is he better ? How wet you are : what has made you ride back ?” The questions were asked by May, as she sat in the low drawing-room of Mr. Prescott’s Rectory, busy over a long grey stocking of rough wool. Geraldine sat reading near her, and looked up quickly when the door was opened, asking questions with her eyes as plainly and eagerly as May did with her lips ; Hubert stood there wiping the wet off his clothes, and answered his sister first.

“Baby is better : papa said he was quiet all night, and they will go to the sea on Monday if he keeps the same. Yes, it is raining cats and dogs ; and I rode home because Mr. Austin said I was to : I was so tired.” He looked at Geraldine then, answering the question he knew without hearing. “No, Gerry, no news : there was only a letter from ’Bert, and nothing in the *Times* ; but I hope I have succeeded in frightening papa at last, now that baby is out of danger. He says he will go up to town and see if he can learn anything when he has settled them at the sea.” Geraldine looked down at her book again, and Hubert came into the room, drawing the stool from under his sister’s feet

and seated himself on it with his head on her lap, putting it down with the sighing wish, "Oh, dear, I should like never to move again: this has been such a long morning!"

The two girls had been staying at the Rectory for some weeks since leaving school, cheering the old clergyman with their bright faces and affectionate care. He had been ailing during the cold wet summer, which was making no amends for the length of the trying winter, and he found their presence so great a pleasure that they wondered when he meant to let them leave him again. Hubert's return walk or ride was always broken at the Rectory gate, and the Saturday half-holidays were welcomed as the time for a longer stay. The girls had grown accustomed latterly to his continual complaints of weariness, but this afternoon they both were struck by the more than usually tired look in his face, as his grave eyes watched the fire, even in the middle of August a pleasant sight in the grate, and again two questions came together. "What makes you so late to-day?" "Did your work go better to day?"

"I went round by the kilns," he answered. "Poor Nicholson is dying, and Pitt's wife and Norris are nearly as bad, I am afraid. Norris would have me read a little, though he is nearly too weak to speak. He is dreadfully unhappy about himself: he would never go to Church, or care about anything while he was well. Nicholson was too bad even to understand me when I told him why Mr. Prescott could not come to-day. As to my work, Gerry, I am afraid Mr. Austin will give me up as a bad job. Work never seemed a trouble before; but now nothing seems to stick in my head, and I am so tired all over."

"I don't think you are well, Hu.: I have thought it for some days," Geraldine said.

"You can't make that out," he said, smiling at her serious look, "any more than Mr. Austin can, though he tries to make me say so. There is nothing wrong with me, if it weren't for this worrying pain going on in my side: it hurts

me every time I breathe now. It is that I think makes me dream so all night, and feel as if I hadn't been asleep at all when morning comes : it is that makes me tired."

"Have you spoken to Mr. Raymond about it?"

"Oh, yes. I told you Mrs. Raymond said she thought it must be a strain : she gave me something horrid smelling to rub it with. Perhaps it is. I was doing gymnastics a long time the other day, though I think it began before that. I hope it will go away soon," and he put down his head again.

To anyone more experienced than his girl companions, the heavy eyes seeming willing to close, though glistening with an unusual brightness, would have told a plainer tale than it did to them; and even May, unwilling as she always was to believe in evil of any kind, could not help feeling some uneasiness at his looks and words, and glanced across at Geraldine, saying, "If you will stay with us till the rain leaves off a little, we will walk up with you to the house."

"Not to make a fuss about me to papa, May : he has had quite enough trouble with poor baby these last days, and now too, when perhaps worse is coming."

He spoke the last words more for himself than meant for her, but she said impatiently, "Hush, Hu. : I believe it is these foolish fears of your's and Gerry's that are making you look ill. You must cheer up : many a vessel's screw must have broken before now, and no great harm done. It is not like you to turn gloomy and think the very worst at once. You know uncle has grown nearly as lazy as Max. about writing."

"That is a silly way of cheating yourself May," Geraldine said, "you know he has written to you nearly every month latterly, up to that one you had in April; while Hubert added, 'You talk like a girl May, to think a broken screw is nothing. It depends on where and how it happened, and it said, 'a violent northeaster blowing at the time;'" then checked himself at the look he saw pass over the beautiful eyes fixed on his face, and May said impatiently, "If harm were to come to dear good uncle—no, it is what could not be : one

might as well give up believing at once that there was any good in praying for anybody."

Hubert lifted up his head, and said in the quiet half-sleepy tone in which he had spoken before, "May, after saying that, what could you say if we heard now that it had been with him as I dreamed last night; it is like saying beforehand that God has no right to do it. In my text book he has put, out of some old author, after two commands about praying, 'The soul tost with a tempest prays, and puts into the will of God as into a harbour; there she lies sheltered from every storm.' The old fellow knew the right way to feel, May. It is better to try the best way one can to put into that harbour and keep what one gets there,—peace at least, if one loses everything else. God has a right to do what He choses with His own servants, however hard we pray to keep them for ourselves;" and he turned his face towards his sister's dress.

The girls again looked at one another: they had never heard such words from him before, and strange and unnatural as they sounded to them, they neither thought to answer them. Presently May said, with another effort to rouse him, "Hu., I am sure now Gerry must be right, and that you are not well, if you are letting yourself be frightened by a dream. You see if we don't hear soon that the 'Euphrosyne' is as well as any of her companions."

"As it happened May," he said drowsily, "it was the other way: it was fear made the dream. You can't think how quiet and blue the water looked; such a deep colour, but so clear: he lay there floating on the top. I could see him quite plainly, but I could not reach him; and then he began to sink quietly down and down, as if he were resting, with one hand across him. The water lifted his hair and floated away his cap, and he lay there quite still, sinking gradually out of sight, till just as I had nearly lost sight of him, he looked up at me and waved his hand to me, just as he used to do when I was a little chap looking after him at

the nursery window, and I heard him call up to me in his jolly sounding voice, 'Servants of the same Master must meet one day before Him,' and after that I could not see him any more : but I am very glad I dreamed it."

"Just you be quiet, Hu.," his sister cried, "and don't tell us any more of your horrid dreams. Lift up your lazy head, and look how your stocking is growing : will this be long enough for your legs this time ? I shall have done them in good time for you to use when you go shooting up on your own moors next month. You shall pay me for them by letting me be your housekeeper, and we shall ask Gerry to be our first guest."

A reference to his own house rarely failed to call up a smile, but he seemed now hardly to notice her words. As she bent over him to look into his face, seeing his flushed cheeks, and felt his quickened breathing as his shoulder rested against her knee, a servant opened the door asking if Mr. Hubert would speak to a child from the kilns : "He says his father is a lime burner and wants to see you, sir."

"Oh, I can't go out there again to day," he said drawing himself up. "Which child is it ?" He went out to see, and looked in next minute saying, "It is little Norris. He says his father is much worse : he wanted to see Mr. Prescott, but if not him, to speak to me. If he comes back by the early train do ask him to drive out there after tea. I'll go up home now and have a sleep, and I'll come down again after, and see if Mr. Prescott has gone ; if not I'll try and get out to the poor fellow again. I should drop off my horse if I tried to go now, and I don't know what more to say to him ;" and not heeding their advice to wait till the rain should have lessened, he left them.

Geraldine stood at the window watching him. "May, I am certain there is something the matter with him : he mounts as if he could hardly drag himself into the saddle. I don't like his complaining so of his side."

"Oh, don't go making him out ill, there's a dear," May

said impatiently, going on with her knitting. "It is not sleeping properly makes him tired, poor boy; now that that tiresome little baby is better, though it is not its fault that they can think of nothing else, I'll go up and talk to papa. And do try and cheer him up about uncle, please Gerry; I am sure he is fretting dreadfully about him: fancy him talking like that. I can't bear to hear him speak of submitting to such a horror as that quietly; it is how old Mr. Prescott might talk. I would infinitely rather hear him," she went on vehemently, "declare, as he used, that it would drive him mad: he is only fifteen."

"And so has a right to feel rebellious?" Geraldine asked, turning from the window with a half smile, though there were tears in her eyes. "I am afraid he is suffering very much about Captain Raymond. I am sorry I asked him anything just now; and it seems so grievous, his quiet way of never expecting to hear himself from him, only looking out for the letters to his father; but he will not say anything about it, only he let out the other day that it is eighteen months since the last came for him. I cannot dream what can have parted those two: they seemed to love each other more than most brothers do. If only he might yet come home in safety, one might ask, and put it right. If the rain stops we will certainly go up to the house after tea."

Late that same evening, when the sun was near the horizon, giving a lighter hue to the massed, leaden-coloured clouds, a tall figure in worn and much-stained blue uniform ran up the steps at the Park, and to the no little surprise of the stiff elderly butler who was crossing the hall, came in without ceremony, saying, "Where is Mr. Raymond?" The answer, "He is engaged at present: will you walk into the drawing-room?" was received with a smile, and a "No, thank you: I am sure I don't look fit to do so." Explaining who he was, and saying he would go up to his room and change his wet things before seeing anyone, he went on

upstairs, looking back to give the order, "Don't mention to your master, or anyone just yet, that I am here: I wish to tell him myself presently." With a happy heart he continued his ascent. Home again at last, after stormy voyaging, sickness and dangers; home again, too, just in the very summer month he would have chosen, the long trying two years of waiting over, and with free permission now to seek and win his bride. He had forgotten every thought that would else have troubled him in this particular coming home, and hastened on to his room, only eager to make himself presentable, and find himself again at her side. It gave a startling check to his pleasant fancies to find himself suddenly at Hubert's, as he invaded his quarters in search of all the necessaries which he had looked for vainly in his own, close shuttered and covered up as the room was.

The boy was lying on his back on the bed, and made no movement as his uncle came up to him and bent down over him, to see in the dim light whether his eyes were shut. He stood by him watching his heavy sleep for some minutes, and studying the sleeper with curiosity, wondering at first at all the change he saw in him, and then remembering that he had no cause to do so. There had been space enough for time and growth to do this work since he had seen him last, a boy of thirteen, turn away with tear-filled eyes upon the station platform. It was not a pleasant thought to him as he stood like this, looking at the one for all those years his charge and favourite, that there had been time, not only for growth of body and change of face, but for other changes too, which those closed lids and sleeping stillness hid from him yet.

"Back again with you: it is hard to believe you other than I knew you," he muttered to himself, bending down to him again. "If he has been obstinate and proud, it strikes me I have been a fool to let this go on for so long. Hu., you must wake and tell me you are sorry for it all, and be

my boy again." He put out his hand to touch the boy's shoulder: it would be more than pleasant to have a look into those brown eyes, ready always for him with love and truth; but he drew back his hand again, thinking it was unkindness to break sleep that seemed to say by its soundness that it was needed. No: he would dress first, and then wake him.

He crossed the room, stopped again, water-jug in hand, by the sight of the row of drawings of vessels upon the wall, each sketch with the well-remembered name, and the date when each could be first called "uncle's ship." He looked at them all, saying, as he stopped before the last, "Anyway I am thankful to see he can't get rid of his old tastes. Where could he have got my poor 'Euphrosyne' from?" His eyes turned then to the face above the fireplace, and many thoughts held him before he could move from it; then it was with one spoken aloud: "How his loss did not drive him to me, even if his wish had changed, is a mystery." Below the picture was a large framed photograph of one corner of the village churchyard; and on the white cross, the centre object, Oswald read the words, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with His likeness." He had heard from Colonel Dennis that he meant to ask Hubert to choose what should be written upon it: he had not known before what his choice had been. The walls, as he looked round them, seemed to give a history of the boy's life for the past two years. There came next a portrait of Mr. Maynard, as a young man, recalling to Oswald his own boyhood's remembrance of him; and then some views of his place. From them Oswald turned to the bookcase, a well filled one; and then to the crowded writing-table, with books and papers littered over it, and one of the drawers standing open, with its contents disarranged, and many of them half out of it. To his surprise, he saw, lying by itself, in one corner of it, evidently placed so on purpose, a large blue envelope, directed to himself, in a hand he well remembered. Above

the direction was written large, in Hubert's writing, the words, "This is to be given, without fail, to Uncle Oswald, if he ever comes home again. I promised Mr. Maynard." Oswald took it up, saying, "There being no *if* to that fact at present, I may as well take possession." And setting down the water-jug, he seated himself in the corner of the window-sill, to seek the last remains of the fading light, and broke the seal with much curiosity. There were two or three papers within the cover; the first he saw at a glance was a letter, which, written in Mr. Maynard's neat fine hand, defied reading by that light. He saw the first words with pleasure, "My dear Oswald, and always most kind friend, I wish, while I still have strength, to write to you my words of farewell," and then laid it down for more convenient reading presently, taking up the next, a blotted and evidently once crumpled up sheet of paper. There was no difficulty in reading the large writing upon that; and the blood rose quickly to his cheeks as he read Hubert's words, under the title, "Grounds for deciding," and then the addition in Mr. Maynard's hand below, "Read this, and then let me ask you St. Paul's question, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.' The thought about myself, which I knew was not *the* one which fixed his course, was what led to my keeping the paper. He must forgive me; but I have treasured it. Let it show you the workings of a noble heart, which you have cruelly misjudged." Oswald hastily took up the next paper, the copy of Bishop Hooper's verses. Again Mr. Maynard's note to them gave him a painful start: "Compare these words with the print he chose as your present to him, and then ask yourself whether the fits of depression and nervous colouring up, which so displeased you, were not the natural signs of a young and tender heart's shrinking from self-chosen and foreseen pain, which, yet at that time, he was still hoping he might escape. He has followed steadfastly in the steps of the noble army of martyrs, and borne the pain he dreaded

bravely. The share of it that you have inflicted has been the keenest, as my letter will show you."

Oswald laid down the papers, and crossed quickly to the bedside. "Hubert, Hubert, you must wake, my boy, and speak to me!" Then shaking his shoulder, "Come, wake! What is making you sleep like this at this time of day?"

He was surprised that instead of starting up, Hubert only turned round moaning, murmuring something about, "I can't reach him."

"Whom do you want to reach?" his uncle asked, impatiently. "Can't you wake?"

"I ought to go to him. He has no one: he is so afraid," was the only answer he got. Then opening his eyes with a start, and change of look, he lay staring at the face above him.

"Hubert, don't you know who I am?" Oswald asked, putting his hand on his forehead. "Are you ill?"

But the boy's face was turned out of sight again with the sighing words, "He is sinking down and down," while the low moaning sound went on.

Oswald lit a candle and brought it, turning the boy's head round, to look at him; but he blinked his eyes as if the light gave them pain, and moved restlessly with the same sound, as if he were suffering.

"Hubert, try and speak. What is the matter with you?" Oswald asked again, feeling his hands and head. They were burning hot, and a minute's touch upon his wrist made his uncle turn from him hastily; and next minute he was looking into room after room in search of his brother.

He found him at last, in one newly fitted up,—one he well remembered; and at sight of the group before the fire he stopped short with a start. Mr. Raymond was kneeling on one knee in front of it, regained health making him look again as he did six years before, one arm round his youngest little girl, and the other hand holding the tiny fingers of the pale baby lying on his wife's lap. He looked up at her

smiling, saying, "He is getting back strength enough for an attempted squeeze." He had given his "Come in," in answer to Oswald's knock, thinking it was a servant, and did not at once look round, giving him time to watch them in a silence he would willingly not have broken; while his face darkened, and his heart beat quicker with painful feelings for some moments,—then he called his brother by name.

His start to his feet was so sudden as to throw Helen to the floor; and holding out his hands he hurried forward with a joyful, "Now, thank God for this! Oswald, dear boy, I had begun to fear the worst for you. Where have you come from?" He repeated the question again when his greeting had been returned.

"All that another time," Oswald answered quickly, coming forward into the light, drawn on by his brother, who held his hand looking at him as though he could hardly believe his eyes. "What is it wrong with Hu.?"

"Nothing, I hope," Mr. Raymond answered, laughing. "Who would have thought to see you here to-night? But you are not going off again that you are in uniform?"

"No: I came here for clothes. All my possessions are at the bottom of the sea."

"Never mind them, so long as you are not," said his brother, grasping his hand again. "Dear me, it is a very intense relief. Could not you have written? It would have spared us a great deal. To see you safe makes me realize how heavy the anxiety has been. But here, you have not spoken to my wife yet; and you have a new nephew to make acquaintance with. What makes you think there is anything wrong with the old one?" he added, watching him curiously, as he stepped forward, saying, as he gravely acknowledged the smiling welcome of his sister-in-law, "I am really too wet to present myself in a lady's boudoir." And only glancing down at the child with a pained look upon his face, turned back again, saying to his brother, "But it was you I

came after now, to speak about Hubert. Something is very much amiss with him."

"Oh, I think not," Mr. Raymond said. He was not pleased with the very grave courtesy of manner to his wife, and went back to her side, asking, "What makes you think so? Where have you seen him? He was quite well at breakfast this morning, and went to his tutor's as usual."

"All I know is, he doesn't know me when I speak to him. He is on his bed, and is ill, as sure as I am well."

"Doesn't know you?" Mr. Raymond repeated, laughing. "Come, Oswald, that is ridiculous. Most probably he was taking a nap in the dark after his walk, and was startled at the sight of you; or, perhaps, was treating you to a little shamming, to avoid meeting face to face the displeasure he has felt upon him from a distance so long. Eh: what do you say to that? You did not notice anything wrong about him, Emily: did you?"

The answer, accompanied with its soft laugh, was displeasing. "Oh, no. Depend upon it, Captain Raymond, he is ill with nothing worse than sleep, and was frightened at the first sight of your face; and no wonder, if you looked at him half as solemnly as you are doing now."

"Come, Newton: come and see for yourself," Oswald said, looking again at his brother. "I am not a connoisseur in signs of illness; but I do know enough to tell the difference between it and sleep: and my belief is, he is down with fever. Come and see him."

Mr. Raymond looked startled, and was moving to follow him, when a detaining hand on his arm, and the imploring cry, "Fever? Oh, do not go near him! think of baby,—for my sake, Newton!" made him stop: he hesitated.

"My love, I must see if he is ill."

"And if it is true,—if he has fever,—what is to become of me? You won't dare come near baby. Let your brother go to him, and we will send up Dr. Scott, when he comes. Nelly, come away from your uncle. You should not go

near anyone, Captain Raymond, till you know if you are safe to do so."

Oswald retreated to the door. Mr. Raymond, still looking undecided, asked more questions; and answering them hurriedly, his brother said, impatiently, "Now, are you coming? For if not, I shall go and send someone for Dr. Scott."

"You shall not go to him, Newton, till we know what it is: it would kill me with terror. Promise me you will not."

His wife's voice of distress fixed his wavering; and he said, "Indeed, I do not think it would be right to risk it: it would be so very awkward for Emily and the child. The poor little infant has been at death's door; though, indeed, I still hope it can be nothing very serious. Why, he has walked home this afternoon from Mr. Austin's. No, though, he did not: I saw him riding across the park. I am very sorry, Oswald: I don't like banishing you like this the minute you are home."

"Never mind that. Then I shall send off for the Doctor."

He was told that he would be here in the course of the evening, anyway; but declaring he knew more about fevers than to risk delay like this, he left them.

They were surprised a quarter of an hour later by the sound of horse's hoofs on the drive below, and Mr. Raymond, looking out, said, "There he goes himself, in this drenching rain, at a hand gallop, looking like a mad sailor. When he takes a fancy into his head, nothing will keep him from running it to extremes. I am glad it is so nearly dark. He might be the wild huntsman himself on that great black horse. Poor dear Hubert! I wish I knew about him. We shall have a fine laugh at them both, if it turns out nothing after all; and yet I don't like his having ridden home: it looks bad."

Dr. Scott was on his way home, leaning back in his gig, half asleep under cloak and umbrella, after a long day's work, when the big horse crossed his path. It took him

some time to understand the meaning of the apparition before him in the darkness; and when he took in who it was, and reached out to grasp the hand held out to him, his explanation was, "It really is excusable my not believing my own ears. They have been making you out as gone to the bottom for the last month."

"I am afraid they must have been anxious at home, by what my brother says; but it was not my fault. Now please don't delay."

With a sigh the Doctor gave the direction to turn again, saying he felt like a sparrow captured by a hawk; and though he had been out since morning, and was pining for his tea, had no power to resist.

"We will provide you with that, and supper too; only come."

Rejoicing in the speedy capture he had made, it was with no small vexation that Oswald saw his prey stolen from him on his way upstairs, and sent into Mrs. Raymond's room, leaving him to stamp up and down the passage,—his brother preaching patience meanwhile, and declaring it was but reasonable to shield a delicate baby a few weeks old from danger of infection. "For indeed, Oswald," he said, "I am beginning to fear you are right about something being the matter with him: I have just found a note he brought me yesterday evening from Mr. Austin, and which I forgot to open before, begging me to keep him at home this morning, and let the doctor see him; that he cannot get him to work, that he seems drowsy, and turns from food. I can't tell how it is I have not noticed him myself, and I don't know what his tutor can have thought of my letting him go to him again, and such a day too."

"Is this the way you take care of your son, Newton?" cried his brother, indignantly. "Go in and fetch the man: I won't see my poor boy die for lack of what I have brought him."

"Don't be absurd, Oswald: you can believe I am as

anxious as you are. Though I am glad to hear the old name again; but still I don't think you are the one to blame me for neglect of him."

Oswald made no answer, and the doctor reappearing he went upstairs with him. "What makes you fancy he has fever?" Dr. Scott said. "Mrs. Raymond says she thinks you are frightening yourself about a fit of sleepiness."

"Folly and nonsense!" Oswald answered, too much troubled and alarmed to be polite. "Come and see for yourself. Go in and speak to him: he only turns from me as if the sight of me were a distress to him. Perhaps with too much reason," he added to himself as the doctor went in.

"Ah, Hubert, beaten at last, and obliged to give in and see me at your bedside! Now what do you expect from me?" was his greeting, which Oswald was surprised to hear answered by, "What have you come for? How is Norris?" and began to think for a moment that Mrs. Raymond after all might be right, till he looked at the Doctor's face and saw it change as he took the boy's hand and looked into his eyes. "Have you been with Norris to-day?" was the next question, answered in half-spoken words, stopping short with a startled glance at Oswald.

"Just stand out of his sight, will you? I told you they all thought you were lost. Why was I not sent for before? Do you know if he has been out at the kilns to-day?"

"By the colour of the mud splashes on these I should say he had," Oswald said, kicking at a pair of leggings and boots on the floor. "That red mud is only found beyond there, and is always half a foot deep in this weather. Why do you ask?"

The Doctor made no reply beyond an impatient grunt, drawing up a chair to the bedside, and beginning to try to get answers to his various questions; but he soon moved, saying, "This is useless. His mind is wandering already: you must help me get him into bed."

As they began to do so, Hubert suddenly sat up, pushed the Doctor from him, crying, "Leave me alone, Dr. Scott: what are you doing?" and without attending to his gentle, "No, my boy: you are ill, and must go to bed," sprang to the floor with an indignant, "I am not ill, and am not going to bed," and then with a cry of pain fell back insensible into his uncle's arms.

"His last protest, poor fellow," said the doctor, as they laid him back again. "There has been grievous neglect here."

In silence Oswald watched him, echoing his words; but as his brother had said, who was he to blame for neglect? They went away presently into the next room. There Dr. Scott sat down at the table, saying angrily as he drew pen and paper to him, "I shall never forgive Mr. Prescott for letting him be poking about in that infected hole, nor myself for not speaking to your brother about it. Four funerals left the place last week, and there will be two more coffins ordered to-night;" and not heeding Oswald's exclamation of dismay he went on, "That boy is the flower of the flock. What has his father been thinking of? He came home in April with a bad cough, after poor Mr. Maynard's death, sets off to work at his tutor's in all weathers, no care taken for him, because he is never ill as they say, and all his looks put down to his quick growth; now, as a trifling matter, Mrs. Raymond just tells me quietly to ask him about a strain he has given his side: a precious sort of strain!" and the doctor laughed scornfully, while Oswald asked, "And what is it?"

"Pleurisy of course, and been coming on for weeks; and that was the state for a lad to go and stand by men dying of low fever, fretting his heart out too all the time after you."

"And he has taken the fever you think? But this is terrible, Dr. Scott."

"You may well say so, and much chance there is for him to fight against it in such a state. Who is there to nurse him? I should like to make his father do it."

"I shall do it," Oswald said. "Dr. Scott, just tell me you don't think so badly of him as your words would lead one to imagine."

His tone made the Doctor change his. "Of course, of course, one can form no judgment at this early stage. You must not mind me: to lose six patients in a week is depressing. He is young: you follow my orders, and with God's blessing we shall see him pull through yet."

Oswald turned from him, he knew the hopeful tone was only assumed to comfort him. He went back to the side of the bed, grief bitterer than any that Hubert had ever felt in that room filling his heart, as he thought of the words he had read, and saw,—as he bent over him again with the cry, "Hu., dear old boy, look up at me: don't you know me?"—that the very sight of him gave pain. Could it be so that he was to sit by and watch that life end, and that—but his thoughts were too bitter to be followed out, and he turned back again, throwing himself into a chair, watching the Doctor writing at the table with the despairing feeling that all his thoughtful care was useless.

"I am very thankful to hear you are free to see after him," Dr. Scott said, when he had finished. "Are you home for a long stay?"

"I had no fixed plans. I have only just landed, but I am a free man at present. My ship is nowhere, and I am in no hurry just yet for another: now of course nothing shall take me away. Oh, my poor boy, my poor boy! what would your mother say to me?" and he stood up pacing about again.

"Don't give in and despair about him, Captain," the doctor said kindly. "I remember now I ought to have been as careful of your feelings about him as his father's, nearly: he was always your shadow. Poor lad—he could not bear to speak of you lately. I would not have spoken so strongly at all, but it startled me seeing so much mischief going on. I wonder he has held up against it during the morning, but he is not one to give in easily; we must hope

to see an improvement by-and-bye, when we get what I have sent for. Oh, what a thousand pities it was he didn't go to sea with you after all! Well, I trust your brother may have no worse reward of his selfishness than a few weeks' alarm."

"Selfishness! what do you mean?" Oswald asked, turning round upon him.

"Excuse my using a plain word," Dr. Scott answered, "but it is a subject that always makes my blood boil. Couldn't you have used a little plain truth with him and made him give in?"

"Don't talk of it, Doctor, it has been one of the bitterest disappointments I have ever known. No: I was carefully kept in darkness till it was too late. But you know it was Hubert's own choice,—at least so my brother wrote to me."

The Doctor laughed his scornful laugh again. "Fiddlesticks!" he said. "And were you green enough to believe that? My dear fellow, your brother and I are very true and old friends, but I think you and I have known him long enough to know how much truth there is in that statement. No doubt it was strictly true to say the boy chose for himself, so it would have been last summer to say he *chose* to spend weeks and weeks at his father's bedside till he was so moped and worn out looking that I frightened your brother into sending him off to Mr. Maynard's: there was no question to my mind what his real choosing was when I saw him spring into the railway carriage next morning. No, no: all I regret in your being here, is that I shall not have the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Raymond spending days of anxiety and sleepless nights by that boy's side. My best nurse, Mrs. Bennet, is disengaged now: you shall have her at hand to help you. You will have no one else, for your brother takes them to the sea on Monday, and I am very sure will be kept there. It is a fortunate thing the two young ladies are safely established at the Rectory, and there they must remain."

"At the Rectory!" Oswald exclaimed, starting round.

"Yes," said the Doctor looking up at him. "I am sorry to say it, but if you turn nurse to your boy here, it must keep you a prisoner while the fear of infection lasts."

"That is understood of course," Oswald answered, turning away. And the Doctor did not see the clenched hands and pressed lips which told of the suffering with which the glad hopes of a few hours before were laid away; it was followed however by a half feeling of relief in the thought that it was borne for the sake of the one whom he had made to suffer so long. "They will know from you," he said, "the reason I cannot come to them; and speak strongly to Mr. Prescott to keep them from the kilns, will you? I wonder he allowed it at all. Poor Hu., poor Hu.!"

"He found him a most useful assistant," Dr. Scott said. "There will be sighs out there when the poor folk know this. It is not all lads who would sacrifice play-time and pocket money too, as he has been doing. I believe he never missed coming round that way from his tutor's since he found the first man ill, an old ally of his, and rode to fetch me to him; and I am very sure it was the contents of his pocket which made my continual orders for brandy and beef-tea so contentedly received. Well, as he took thought for the sick and needy, may God deliver him in his time of trouble!" He stood up as he spoke. "Now will you let me have the tea you promised, and I will come up again the minute your messenger returns."

"The deliverance may be given in a form we hardly consider as blessing," Oswald said, sighing bitterly, and turning back to the other room again, where he knelt by the bed, watching the restless motions and listening to the painful hurried breathing. "Yes," he murmured, with the boy's hand in his, "nothing but praise, love and honour on all hands, and from me doubt, blame and neglect." Then the doctor came after him speaking encouragement, and ordered him to change his damp clothes, and come down with him.

"No: I won't leave him. You go down: it is all ready for you. You are sure you can do nothing more for him first?"

"No. You must let him be as he is: he will doze in that way, if you leave him undisturbed, till I come back to him. He had better get what sleep he can while he may. Come downstairs and get some food yourself: you have a long watching before you, and must husband your strength for his sake. You must not turn hopeless, Captain, or you will make a bad nurse. I must go and find your poor brother now. What will he say to this? I think you may thank me for not leaving you to be the one to tell him."

Weeks passed away after that evening, and September came in, bringing with it bright warm days, such as August had cheated them of. The windows stood open in Hubert's room, the soft breeze moving the curtains, and the afternoon sunshine making the watch by his bedside seem all the sadder; so much more natural it would have been to hear his voice, as in the old days, calling up to his uncle to come and join them in a game of cricket. It was only heard now in wandering talk, or murmurs of pain, and in calls for his father, or Mr. Maynard, most distressing to Oswald, and surprising to the Doctor. Eighteen months ago it would have been "Uncle, uncle," for everything.

Oswald was sitting with a book on his knee, half asleep, comforted to see that Hubert's eyes were closed, after a long night and day of restlessness. He had thought several times during the weary hours that he had been more conscious of his presence; but he had been afraid to agitate him by speaking to him. Now starting from a nap, under the continually returning recollection that it was time to move to give him something, he met the boy's eyes open, and fixed upon him, with the quiet look that told they had been so employed for some time.

"Well, do you know who I am?" he said, bending down to him, and putting a glass to his lips.

"Yes: I know," was the whispered answer. "Thank you. I am afraid I have been giving you a great deal of trouble."

"Yes: that you have," Oswald said, with a smile, thankful at last to hear him speak with meaning. "You are feeling easier, dear boy: aren't you?" And he took his hand between his own.

"I don't know," he answered, trying to draw his hand away. "Please tell papa to come to me."

But the hand was held fast as the question was asked, "Why? Are you tired of having me take care of you?"

"It is you who will be tired, not I," was the answer.

And Oswald felt the hand turn cold in his, and saw a rush of colour into the white cheeks, as the boy turned away his head, as if unwilling to say more. His manner and words showed plainly that his memory was awake again; and Oswald felt that the time had come when he must say what he had been longing to speak for weeks, and put himself back, if it might be, upon the old fond footing. He was in such dread of exciting him, however, that he determined to leave it a little longer, hoping he might forget again and sleep. But he saw that the watchful eyes stayed open, following him constantly, and that troubled thoughts were bringing back his restlessness.

As it grew dusk at sunset, and he came back to him, after dining downstairs, he determined to put off speaking no longer, as he noticed that Hubert, rousing from a half-sleep at his entrance, greeted the first sight of him with a smile of pleasure, that was checked instantly by some recollection, making him turn away his face with a look of trouble. He knelt down by him, telling him, as he kissed his cheek, how glad he was that he knew him again, "You have so long thought me drowned that you could not take in who I was, though you knew Cox when he sat up with you the other night; and you have often known Dr. Scott. I don't think now, though, that you are quite certain about me."

"Yes, I am," Hubert answered. "I haven't been. I did think you were drowned ; but I know now. Oh, I wish papa would come ! Where is he ? Why doesn't he ?"

"Hubert, have you grown to dislike me so, that you want your father instead ?" Oswald asked, noticing how his name was never used, and feeling all the pain that his voice showed. "You used to be satisfied if you had me."

"Yes, of course I was ; but it makes me too miserable now. If I were well I could bear it ; but it makes my head ache so trying not to think about it. It is very kind of you indeed," he went on, hurriedly. "But, indeed, I would rather have papa. I could forget about it then." Then seeing Oswald's look, he added, apologetically, "Please don't be angry : perhaps I ought not to say it ; but I hardly know what I say. I feel so miserable ; and, indeed, it makes me worse to look at you."

"Hubert, my boy," Oswald said, "you will break my heart if you speak to me like this. Listen to me,—nay, you must not turn away from me till at least you have heard what I have been waiting to say to you. Since coming home, I have found out that I have made a grievous mistake,—that I have been wrong, quite, in my opinion about you, that I was unjust in my judgment, and that I have blamed you for what you were not to be blamed for. I want to ask you now for your forgiveness. Forgive me, and let me hear you call me uncle once more, and be my own dear boy again."

Hubert had lain without moving, listening with fixed eyes. Now with a visible struggle to control his voice, he said, "Do you mean that you were wrong when you said that I had stooped to deceive you ; and in despising me for staying at home ?"

It was not pleasant to hear his judgment so worded ; but this was no time for explanation or self-defence, and Oswald answered, "I mean that I was wrong altogether ; and that I love you now better, and honour you more than ever before."

There came then a smothered cry of "Oh, uncle, uncle!" and Hubert slipped his head from the pillow upon Oswald's arm, and burst into passionate crying. It was as if the long pent up sorrow, latterly kept down so resolutely, must find vent at last; and now, when there was no strength to check it, Oswald was frightened at its violence. All his soothing did no good, and he grew still more alarmed as a death-like look of exhaustion came over his face, and he lay motionless again, breathing faintly. It was no longer difficult for him to believe Mr. Maynard's strong words in his letter: "If you had wished to give him the greatest pain you could inflict, you could not have succeeded better." He was thankful it was near the hour for the Doctor's evening visit, but found his questions difficult to answer, as he had to submit to an alarmed cross-examination on the state in which he found his patient.

Oswald wondered, as the days went on, that Hubert never spoke of what had passed between them; but he seemed, in his extreme weakness, to rest satisfied with the one fact he knew,—that he was loved again. Only his uncle saw that he could not bear him away from him; and that he had ceased, even when his mind was wandering, the calls for his father, which before had so distressed him. The long strain began at last to tell upon himself, and his patience to wear very threadbare, as no change came for the better, and fresh causes of anxiety pushed the hope of recovery into dimmer distance.

As Mr. Raymond read the Doctor's daily reports, he had no inclination now to laugh at his brother's way of running things to extremes, believing well the repeated assurance,—that to his unflinching devotion, his son's life, if spared, would be owing, quite as much as to the Doctor's advice. He often felt, as he passed day after day with his heart heavy with grief and anxiety, that it was in some sort a retributive justice, which had so ordered it; that he was held now like this from that one, whom he, against his will, had held

near himself so long ; and that he was forced to yield him over once again to the old care.

It was with redoubled vehemence one morning, as he saw the Doctor's face look more than usually desponding, that Oswald repeated the question asked so often already, "When is he going to begin to get well?"

"I wish I could tell you," was the answer : "his state makes me very uneasy. I have written to his father that the very ghost of the fear of infection is over, and that he must come home and give you a rest. Go out and have a ride ; the poor boy does not need now such close attendance as you give him, and you are showing how you are pining for fresh air."

Oswald did not deny it as he looked from the window. His pining for something more precious, he had determined, in his self-accusing hours by Hubert's bed, should be left unsatisfied till the shadow of death were lifted from off them. "No, I cannot go," he said : "I cannot leave him, and I will not give up my boy even to his father's care."

"You must have change, Captain Raymond," the doctor urged, "or you will knock up altogether." And with a little more persuasion Oswald gave in and went for his ride as he was told, and by the time he had done his dozen miles and had come back to the village again, his self-mortifying purposes were forgotten, and his horse was soon standing at the Rectory gate.



CHAPTER XXVI.

CONFIDENCE.

“Thou art mine : in bliss and sorrow,
In the shade as in the shine,
Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
To the age of ages,—mine !
Yea, my Master,
Mine Thou art, for I am Thine.—*Stone.*”

“**W**ILL you see a visitor, Hu. ? or would you rather be quiet ?”

Oswald asked the question as he came into his nephew's room one afternoon in the early part of October. Hubert lay no longer in bed, but upon a sofa in the window. He had been alone a long time, except for Foster's coming at intervals to see if he wanted anything, and was beginning to feel rather forsaken and dreary, tired of looking at nothing but the tops of the yellow woods against the clouds, and of having nothing to interrupt his own thoughts but an occasional brown leaf whirled by the wind against his window-pane. He looked up well pleased at the idea, and at the break upon his solitude.

It had begun to be the fashion through the house to say he was getting better, though Dr. Scott never said it, and Oswald carefully avoided questions which he never, with truth, could answer hopefully. Added days brought no added strength, and though the Doctor insisted on his being

moved to the sofa for a few hours every day, he would much rather have been left where he was.

"Say what you would really like," his uncle went on; "for you are looking woefully tired."

"That is nothing new. I shall like it, uncle. What a long ride you have had; and a pleasant one I should guess, by your face."

"It seems a shame to tell you what a famous gallop we have had, poor old man."

"No: don't say that. I suppose the time will come some day when I shall be able to sit Witch again." Hubert said it as merely making a statement; but his eyes asked, with a petitioning look, for confirmation of his words.

It went to Oswald's heart, as he could only answer, "You should give up trying to exist on one spoonful of beef tea a day, and there is no knowing then what you might not do."

The subject of beef tea being Hubert's particular dread, he turned quickly to another. "But who is the visitor? Not May again to-day? or if it is you must tell her to be quiet: she nearly killed me yesterday, making me laugh."

"No," his uncle said: "she is raving away downstairs like a little maniac, because I won't allow her to come up, calling me every bad name in her vocabulary; but I can't risk having you looking again as you did last night."

"My visitors certainly treat me in different ways," Hubert said. "Poor 'Bert sat by me on Sunday, hardly daring to speak above his breath. May talks and laughs as fast as she can about everything, as if to make believe I am perfectly well. And as to papa, he sits contemplating me; and the pleasantest thing he can think of to say is, 'Dear me: how frightfully bad you do look!'"

"I will tell them the result of your observations," Oswald said, laughing. "I wonder what account you will give of the next. A rather different one I think."

"Who is it?" Hubert asked. "Oh, is it Geraldine? Won't she really mind coming to see me up here? Oh, do

tell her to come ! Is she downstairs ? Put a chair for her here by me."

"You don't think then she will tire you out?"

"She? No. Do tell her to come: it is such a time since I have seen her. And don't plague May, telling her what I said: let her come up again to-morrow."

A few minutes after, quiet steps were crossing the floor, followed by the soft rub of the end of the riding habit upon the carpet, and Geraldine came to his side. How welcome his face told her, as he held out his hands, speaking the greetings to which she found it as difficult to answer as to hide the start of grieved surprise at sight of what looked like the shadow of the boy she had watched away from the rectory gate. The long straight figure, under the white covering, lying in that helpless weakness, seemed as little removed from death as did the ashey pale face. But the eyes, at least, were alive; and the bright smile was so like himself, that, remembering the warning she had had before the room door had been opened for her, "The worst thing for him is agitation," she soon quieted herself, and seated herself by him, telling of their ride, finding a cheering subject for him in the account of the halt made at the kilns on the way home, and of the perfect recovery of some of his friends there. The messages she had in charge for him were many, and she knew how to spin her story to a pleasant length, that saved him the effort of more than an occasional remark or question.

It was interrupted presently by a knock at the door, preceding Hubert's dread,—the afternoon dose of beef tea. "Don't make such a face at it, Hu. You can take it if I give it to you, I am sure," she said, as he turned from it, looking defiance at Foster, who stood by, urging him to let him raise him, and give it to him.

"The Captain says I am to see that you take it all, sir. Now do try, dear Master Hubert: it does vex him so to see everything go down only just touched."

"Don't you stay, Foster: I'll make him take it. Give it to me." And Hubert began to feel hopeless of escape, as she drew off her gloves, proceeding to taste the steaming contents of the cup, and to sprinkle in salt. "Now then, be a good boy, and open your mouth. I should think there were just a dozen spoonfuls here, and every one you take is one less to swallow. Or do you like drinking it best?"

"Oh, no: a spoonful is enough at a time. But I warn you, a dozen is more than I can dream of."

He had not gone further than the second, when he suddenly caught her hand, exclaiming, "Why, Gerry, you have got uncle's ring: that is his diamond!"

"Don't look at me as if I had stolen it, Hu.," she said, holding the spoon to his lips.

But he moved his head back, saying, "But has he given it to you? I never should have thought" — Then looking up at her glowing cheeks: "Oh, Geraldine, is he— has he" —

"He means me to have an aunt's right one day to scold a refractory nephew, who won't eat his soup," she said, smiling at his confusion.

"No, put it away, please: I can't touch any more of it now, indeed I can't. Oh, Gerry! is it really true? I am so glad! How happy you will both be now! Why didn't he tell me though himself?"

"He never meant you to find out like this," she said. "He had meant to tell you this evening. You were so very unwell last night, when he came back to you, you were not fit to talk about anything. Hu., dear boy, I wish this had not happened: you are trembling all over. Are you faint?"

She was alarmed at his look, as he answered, weakly, "Yes: you must call him. I have grown such a wretch: the least thing makes me get like this."

She rang the bell hastily, distressed to see the tears in the boy's eyes, which he tried to prevent her noticing by turning

his face to the pillow ; and was greatly relieved when Oswald came in, asking, anxiously, "What is it?"

"He is faint, I am afraid ; and I don't know what to give him," she said.

It was some time before the strong remedies his uncle used took effect ; and when he was lying more comfortably again, Oswald told him not to talk ; asking Geraldine, who was bathing his forehead and fanning him, "And what was the cause of this?"

"It was this," she answered, shyly, touching her finger and the sparkling stone.

And Oswald, looking at it and her with a proud smile, bent over his nephew, saying, "And it startled you : did it? Not unhappily, I know."

A smile and warm clasp of the hand was the answer ; and too weak to say anything, he lay contentedly watching the two as they fell into talk between themselves. Presently he revived enough to grow interested, listening ; and by the time Foster appeared again, this time with a tea-tray, he was able to enjoy the cup which Oswald gave him from the table at the side of his sofa, where Geraldine had been established as tea-maker.

"I am glad I have had you both like this," he said. "It seems snug to have had a meal together again ; and to-day particularly. Will you give me a kiss, Gerry, and let me say my good wishes, which I could not before?"

She bent down to him, saying, "Thank you, my dearest Hu. : from you it comes like all my three brothers' good wishes in one."

"Well, you will have something better than brothers now," he said ; "even when the last is gone. Uncle, you won't mind giving me a kiss too : will you? It is a farce wishing you joy when you have it. But it makes me very happy to know you will have the best thing in the world to comfort you, when"——

His uncle hastily stopped the finishing of his sentence,

and moved to sit behind him, raising him a little to lean against him, saying, as he did so, "The only comfort I want, my boy, is to see you begin to pick up some strength, and to get rid of this cough. Think how jolly it will be when we come and pay you a visit up in your own house. Will you take us in?"

Hubert shook his head. "It is strange how often I have fancied that to myself," he said; "for since papa's marriage I have more than once thought you might follow his example in this way. And this afternoon I was thinking how nice it would be for you both to go and stay up there, and have that as your home. I should like to have shown it all to her," he added, sadly. "But you know it as well as I do: and I am sure Mr. Maynard would like it so."

"Hubert," his uncle exclaimed, drawing him closer, and looking down at him anxiously, "what is making you talk like this? You are not feeling worse to-day: are you?"

"Not particularly. But, uncle, you know very well that I have good reason for what I say: haven't I? Don't you think it is treating me like a baby, or a coward, to go on as Dr. Scott and papa do with me? I don't want you to begin too. I was asking them what that doctor, who came this morning, thought of me. And Dr. Scott would only joke, as he always does; and papa says, Oh, they all hope I shall be better soon; and then he went away, and I have not seen him since. I want you to be kind, and tell me: I have a right to know." As his uncle was silent, he added, putting his hand on his knee, "Don't be afraid to tell me, whatever it is: I am not afraid to hear it. I have been thinking about it a long time this afternoon, while I was lying alone; for I began to fancy, from his manner to me, that he was sorry for me: he was so extra kind."

Geraldine looked from the one face to the other, pitying Oswald as he glanced up at her with an expression of distress, answering Hubert's added pleading. "Ask him, Gerry, to tell me: he will do what you ask him."

"I need no persuasion, dear boy, beyond your wish, I assure you. I wish you had not begun to think about this; but as you have, it is better for you to know the truth than worry yourself to try and find out."

"Thank you, uncle. He does not think I am going to get well, does he?"

He spoke so calmly that they wondered at him; and Oswald answered, "He was not at all hopeful, my boy, not at all; and it has depressed your father greatly. But Dr. Scott does hope still that this new stuff you have begun to day may give you a start yet."

Hubert shook his head; then asked again, in the same quiet tone, "And how long does he think I may go on like this?"

"Oh, Hu., darling, don't!" Geraldine cried, kneeling down by him, unable to keep back her tears, and hiding her face on his hand. "Let us believe Dr. Scott. You will get better soon: we can't lose you."

Oswald bent down to her, whispering, "You must control yourself, my dearest. Let him say what he wishes. He must not be excited." And she checked her tears, listening to Oswald's answer, given in a low but quiet voice: "Not beyond Christmas he thinks."

The boy lifted his head with a little start, then put it down again, saying, "Thank you. I didn't think it was as soon as that."

"This is only his opinion," Oswald said quickly; "and I have only told it to you to be honest with you. Dr. Scott is much more encouraging; and as Geraldine says, let us believe him; or, better still," he added: "let us leave the doctors and put our trust in what you have taken care you shall not forget, I see."

As he spoke he touched the arm that lay on his knee; the sleeve had been pushed up, and the blue mark showed plainly on the white thin wrist.

Hubert moved his head and looked down at it, the colour

coming into his cheeks, as he said with a smile, half ashamed, "How do you know what that means? It was a silly thing to do, and has given me plague enough with the other fellows; but nobody ever found its meaning out before, not even Bert, though he was always at me to tell him."

"No one had the key to it that I had," Oswald said. Hubert looked up at him questioning, "Won't a verse in the 44th of Isaiah give me the three words for the letters round the cross? That stands for the first letter of our Lord's name, and the others are 'I belong to.' I thought I was right," he said as Hubert looked up with a smile. "Since you have been ill I have often wondered what you had meant by it; I should rather have expected to find on your arm an anchor, such as I got an old sailor up in Cumberland to mark on mine when I was a boy; but the cross put in that position, struck me one day as the Greek letter; and then that told how the others must stand for the words of dedication to our Master's service."

"No, I wanted no anchor," Hubert said: "I could remember without fear of forgetting my dedication to *that* service: there was risk of forgetting the other." He looked at his arm a few minutes, then added low, as if thinking aloud: "Yes, it was a hard fight between cross and anchor."

His uncle passed his hand gently over the close cut hair, saying, "Yes, between faith and hope; and love came in and gave the victory,—gave it to what was heavenly, and replaced the earthly hope by a sure and eternal anchor."

Hubert squeezed the fingers that were round his without answering. After a little silence he said in his weak voice, "Yes, to have that anchor well grounded is the greatest of all blessings, I think,—at least so one feels when one has to lie helpless like this and face the thought of—oh, uncle." A little tremor passed over him, and his uncle felt his arm suddenly drawn closer round, and the head on his shoulder pressed more heavily.

"It is very terrible, my boy," he whispered, holding him

close : "very terrible. God grant though it may yet be many years before you have to face it closer than this ; but, close or distant, you will trust and not be afraid."

Geraldine had been watching his face as she knelt by him, and now said, quickly, "Oh, I don't think Hu. is afraid."

"No, I am not afraid," he answered, quietly : "it is quite a different feeling from fear. Are sailors afraid when their anchors are sure, uncle ? and as you say, that is what our hope is to us,—'an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.'"

It was plainly no shifting anchor to which his soul was fastened by the firm cable of a heaven-wrought faith ; and his uncle's heart was full, with mingled thankfulness and grief, as he said, "Thank God for His good gift to you, Hubert : it has been truth with you ; 'Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed :'" adding lower, in a bitter tone, something about making tribulation heavier, of which Geraldine only guessed the meaning. He laid the boy back upon his pillow, and got up, taking a turn or two up and down the room without speaking, and then went quickly from it. It was growing dusk when he returned to them, and Hubert was lying quietly sleeping, with his hand in Geraldine's. The nurse was called to take her place then, and she kissed the white cheek and left him.

The sleep had changed to feverish restlessness by the time Oswald returned to his post ; and the nurse wanted to rouse him. "It is time he took something, sir."

"It is nearly ; but I don't like waking him, he has had so little sleep lately. I'll ring if I want you."

He stood by him watching him, as he tossed his hand across him or turned his head, disturbed by the constant weak cough every few minutes,—looking at him with a face more sad than he ever let Hubert see him wear, changing his position at last to kneel beside him, and pray afresh the

one prayer he prayed night and day. The greatness of his own new happiness deepened his feeling of tenderness and pity as he watched the long-continuing suffering; seeming, as each day drew to a close, to show the plainer that earthly hopes of happiness for the boy were ending. As he knelt with his elbow on the head of the sofa, he was ready to accuse himself of heartlessness, for even the short liberty he had granted to his own joy to occupy him as it had done that day; and again he renewed the earnest determination, made on first reading Mr. Maynard's letter: "He shall be my first care, at any cost."

It was with a cry of terror that Hubert suddenly woke. "Oh, save him, save him!" looking round him wildly; then recalling where he was, he turned his head with a heavy sigh, saying, "Oh dear, how tired I am!"

"You are done up, poor old man," Oswald said. "You shall have something. I did not like to wake you: I thought the little sleep would rest you. It would more if you didn't dream so, and then wake with such a start."

"I wish you would wake me when I begin to move: it is no rest to sleep, when I live through everything again. And I am always dreaming you are drowning, or something; and I see it all so plainly: it is horrid. I would rather lie awake, and know myself like this. I think this rests me more than anything."

"What," his uncle asked, "eating jelly?"

"No: having you by me, I mean. In the night even, when I am feeling worst, remembering suddenly that you are not two yards off, makes it bearable. Better even than to be well, and without you. Without you, I mean, in the way I have been. Only I wish I could get out of the trick of dreaming it all over so."

It was the first time he had touched upon the subject of their separation; and Oswald answered, not a little moved: "Hu., my boy, I don't deserve this faithful love of yours. Anyone else's would have snapped with such a strain."

"Uncle, how could that be? Loving you is part of myself," Hubert said, simply. "And I had to go on loving you just the same, whatever you said or did."

Oswald looked at him inquiringly a minute, and then said, with a smile, "Did you, Hu.? I think I must beg leave to differ from that last part of your sentence; for though it is what Mr. Maynard says of you too, I can't agree with you both, knowing, as I do, the determined pride and resentment you showed,—that it was 'loving me *just* the same,' as you say; or 'never thinking a thought of anger against me,' as he says."

"But what do you mean?" Hubert asked, wonderingly. "Pride and resentment?"

"Yes, my boy: that is what it looked like to me. Still I have had so sharp a lesson against hard judging, that I will not call it so again till we have talked the matter over. Which we will hope to do when you are better."

"It won't tire me to hear you talk about it, uncle. And I must know what you mean. I can't imagine. Only please may I go back to bed first?" It was with a sigh of content that he welcomed the change of position, followed by an earnest petition that his uncle would leave him, and go down again to the Rectory. "We can have our talk when you come up to bed. Oh, how you must have been hating me all these weeks! Don't stay, please. I shall do now."

"Now you hush that at once, Hu. I was afraid of your hearing of this, because of the fuss you would begin to make. But you understand,—you are my first care, and nothing will take me from you now more than before. Because my happiness is doubled a hundredfold, I don't see the reason that yours should be halved: do you? My boy," he added, more gravely, "when I think of all the misery I have caused you, I can but rejoice to give you any comfort or help I have it in my power to give. Now, I think you had better lie still, and not talk any more."

"No, uncle: I would much rather hear what you were

going to tell me. I should only be worrying about it all night, if you don't."

"If so, let us have a few words about it, and get it off our minds. There are one or two things I wanted to ask you. Mr. Maynard blames me with such unmitigated blame that I should be glad to make sure, for one thing, that you knew more of the reasons of my doings than he did."

"Of course I knew more, uncle. I am sorry he has written like that."

"No, no, Hu.," Oswald interrupted: "all he says is perfectly just, so far as he goes. There is no unkindness in what he says; only he did not know all that I want you to know, or all even that you did know, and how intensely bitter the disappointment about you was to me."

"Yes, uncle: I am afraid I was too much taken up with myself just then to think as I ought about that. I have wanted to tell you more than once how sorry I am that I did not write myself, and tell you that I could not go to sea. I don't think it was treating you respectfully."

"Yes, why was it you did not, Hu.? Why have left it to your father to be the one to tell me what concerned you and me most; and what we had always known as *our* wish and plan, not his? It was treating me as if I had nothing to do with it."

Hubert lay thinking a few minutes; then said, "It is hard to remember exactly, now that I have you by me like this again, how I felt then; but I was so horribly miserable. It was that stopped my writing: I really did not know how. I was waiting, too, hoping for you to write, and comfort me, as you did when Harry died. How I did want you! If it had not been for dear Mr. Maynard, I don't know what I should have done. But I see now I ought to have written myself. I never dreamed how it must all have looked to you."

"Yes: I naturally thought, having had my suspicions aroused before, that you were ashamed to write."

"The right thought would have been that I was too unhappy," Hubert said. Then colouring up, he asked, "Would you mind telling me what made you think I had stooped to deceive you? Was it my not writing made you think that? I suppose I ought to have written too in answer to that letter; but I couldn't."

"No, I don't wonder you couldn't; though it would have been far better if you had. Hubert, I should just like to show you the letter I received from your father; only it would not be fair to him. With that in my hand I had quite enough to make me think all I did. It brought my suspicions, against which my wise Geraldine had warned me, to a climax. You had told me straight to my face, the day I went away, that you should never change your mind, when already your uneasy manner often with me had begun to make me think you had. A little more than a month after your father writes, and with no reason given, that your mind is changed: that of your own choice you have fixed to stay at home; and that you are enjoying your life with him, and your studies alone with Mr. Maynard. I think I have never been angrier in my life than when I got that letter. What could I think but that you had been acting a long deception with me, and set you down as weak spirited, and self-indulgent, spoilt by home petting, and over-persuaded by your father's entreaties."

His face flushed with a return of the remembered wrathful indignation; and Hubert put his hand into his, saying, "Poor uncle: I don't wonder you were in a rage with me if papa said all that."

"Aye, and gave me the impression that you were as jolly as possible; while not a line coming from yourself only deepened my belief that you were ashamed to write to me."

"Then he wrote what he fancied, or wished, not what was. But then, of course, he did not see how awfully wretched I was; and when I could not quite help his seeing some-

times, he always spoke to me as if it was only my unhappiness about Harry."

"Ah, Hu., why hadn't I known you better; or rather held fast what I did know of you, and guessed at the true reason."

"You see I would have talked to you about it before you went, only papa had said I must not; and, indeed, I had only begun to think then that — But I daresay Mr. Maynard told you all that," Hubert said, interrupting himself, too weak to waste unnecessary words.

"Yes, yes: he has told me everything: the whole story, — a story which makes me find it very hard to forgive my brother any more than myself." Hubert looked up quickly, but said nothing; and his uncle added, "But now you must lie quiet a bit: I am going down to dinner. I'll finish my questions when I come back."

Hubert was ready for them, and curious to hear what he could not even guess at: asking, "Is it something I have done, which you did not understand, that made you think I showed pride and resentment?"

"Yes, Hu. Did you never wonder how it was that I let the silence between us go on for so long as eighteen months?"

"Oh, often, and often: but I supposed you were too displeased with me to forgive me. Afterwards I sometimes thought you wanted to wait till you could speak to me. Papa said you did want to have seen me that time you came home for a night."

"I had twice begun letters to you, Hu.: both checked half way through by acts of your own."

"Acts of mine!" repeated the boy, incredulously.

"Yes: acts which looked like intense pride, and determination to have nothing more to do, in the old way, with me."

"Oh, uncle," Hubert said, with tears in his eyes, "how could you think such a thing of me? I know I have never given you any reason. What acts do you mean?"

He looked so pained that Oswald's suspicions were gone

before the explanation was asked. "I see I have been an idiot. But tell me what made you tell your father to send back the money I had given for your use, and to say that it was done at your wish ; as you having changed your mind, I should, no doubt, prefer changing mine ?" Hubert looked at him without answering, two bright spots of colour burning in his cheeks, and breathing quickly ; and his uncle regretted he had mentioned the subject. "I see, Hu., you did not do it. It was a mistake, no doubt, on his part," he said, lightly. "Don't think any more about it. It was stupid of me to believe you had anything to do with it ; but it angered me at the time, and I tore up the letter I had half written to you."

"And for which I would have given everything I possessed," said Hubert, trembling with excitement. "How dared he — What was the other thing?"

"No : never mind, my boy," Oswald said. "I ought not to be letting you think of what worries you."

"No, tell me," cried Hubert : "I must know now !"

"How was it I found Charlie Donne's watch put back in my drawer, with his name written on it again, as if you wouldn't keep or wear my present to you? I had begun to write to you again that night, as I had missed my chance of seeing you ; but finding it like that vexed me so, I gave it up. It was not only that, though : your father had been talking about you, and was so provokingly triumphant and satisfied. It is always irritating to have to hear 'I told you so ;' and I was so disappointed, so bitterly grieved at having my hopes and plans for you overthrown, and my love for you, as I thought, repulsed, that I am afraid I lost my temper ; indeed I know I did, and had not found it again when I found the watch. I am sure now it was for no reason such as I thought. But tell me why you put it back."

Hubert answered quickly, the colour deepening : "It was not mine to keep. You told me when you gave it to

me that Mr. Donne wished a sailor to have it, so it could be mine no longer. Oh, it was like cutting myself adrift from my anchor, indeed, when I took that off!"

His uncle bit his lip, and rose hurriedly; returning next minute with the watch in his hand. "May I put it back on your chain, Hu.? My mind must have been blackened with anger, truly, when I could twist an action prompted by the strictest honour into fresh cause for blame. Forgive me, dear Hu.: I ask your pardon a thousand times. Come, I shall think you are angry with me really, if you look like that. There, take the watch again, and I will fetch the chain; or do you prefer using Mr. Maynard's now?"

"Oh no, no!" Hubert said; his eyes filling, as he lay looking at the little watch in his hand. "I'll have none but this, if I may. But oughtn't you to keep it yourself, or send it back to Mr. Donne?"

"He only said that to persuade me into taking it," Oswald said, changing the watches. "And if you are not like his poor boy in his profession, you are like him in a likeness he would value more. There: we must hope soon to see it in use again," he said, putting it in a stand on the mantelpiece.

"Now, uncle, please, will you ask papa to come and speak to me?" Hubert asked.

"Why, Hubert, what for?" his uncle asked, much astonished at the unusual request, and the tone in which it was made. "What should you want him for now?"

"He must tell me about that letter he wrote!" Hubert said, fiercely. "All I asked him to do was, to return you the money, because it could not be used for me, as you had intended; and it was not fair to have it used anyway else. But to fling it back at you like that, and say I wished it, because my mind was changed: how did he dare? It was false. No wonder you were angry. Please call him."

"Your father has gone back to the sea again to-day, my boy: he is going to bring them all home to-morrow. Dr.

Scott forbade his coming to you again before he left: the Doctor's opinion this morning had so upset him."

Then, as Hubert said, in the same tone, "Well, then, he will have to tell me about it when he comes back. It was saying I said what I didn't say, and gave me more than a year of misery;" his uncle went on: "Hu., you wouldn't add to his unhappiness now,—would you?—when he is grieving so, by raking up old wrongs. I am sure he cannot have meant to deceive you or me. He often writes and speaks without sufficiently thinking of the way others will take his words, when he is indifferent himself how they do. He has often driven me wild by the things he has said of me. I think he has been very wrong in a great deal in this matter; but we must forgive him, Hu. I have had such a hard struggle to do so myself; and I find the only way is to put the thought of it all away, and you must just do the same, and try and forget it." There was no answer; and Oswald said, "You have forgiven me a much greater wrong: you won't keep wrath against him?"

"You thought, and indeed you had good reason, to be angry. He injured me secretly,—behind my back: he ought to know it."

"If I had not already felt wrongly to you, Hu., his incorrect representation of your words would have done you no harm. He had no intention to injure you with me. But I must see you lying quiet again, now: your hands are burning."

But quiet was not gained by lying silent, while thoughts were busy. He turned his face to the wall; and Oswald went into the next room to write, thinking he might go to sleep, if left alone. But he returned, to find him with his arms flung outside the clothes, moaning with restlessness, and his eyelashes wet with tears.

"What is it, poor boy? what can I do for you?" his uncle asked, bending down to him. "I wish now I had not let you talk of these matters, though I am glad on my

own account to know my dear boy blameless : we shall have you paying for it all night."

"I am just as glad to know that you were not unkind ; but, oh, uncle, I can't bear to think of papa treating me so."

"Are you worrying about that still ? Look here, Hu.," his uncle said, sitting down by him, "I have just been writing to Mr. Prescott, telling him he may come and see you on Sunday afternoon ; he says he shall like to do what you wish, and give you the Communion after the second service. Your father will be sure to join us then, and Geraldine and May, and as those whose sins are pardoned we shall eat of that Feast together ; will you rejoice in the pardon yourself, and refuse forgiveness at the same time, to the one who kneels next you, for a misrepresentation ?"

"Oh no, no, uncle," Hubert cried : "I didn't mean not to forgive him."

"But you wanted to make him feel himself wrong first : quite the right order of things generally, but not in this case ; it would only make painful feeling. It is a thing of the past : you and I understand about it, and that is all that is necessary. Come now, Hu., be a good boy, and promise me you will say nothing about it to him ; indeed it is the only true way of forgiving such an injury, just to forget it altogether."

"Then I will say nothing, uncle."

Oswald saw it was hurt feeling as well as resentment which had roused him so, and to turn away his thoughts he said : "Now, I want you to do something for me. Say what you would like done with that money that has given us so much trouble, for I shall never touch it : it has lain at the bankers ever since your father sent it there. I have sometimes thought of telling the Life Boat Institution they may have it ; but now, whatever you say shall be done. I look on it as yours."

Hubert looked up pleased, saying at once : "Oh, I know what to say without thinking even. Let me double it, and

let a house be begun at once for the orphan children. I want to do something for them. Colonel Dennis pays for two always now for Harry's sake. I can't bear to think of their living on in those two old cottages while I have two such homes. Please say Yes to my joining you, and get papa to allow me. If I get well I should want to do it, and if not—why there the money is still, and you will see it done for my sake, won't you?"

Oswald's only answer was a firmer clasp of the hand he was holding. He could not face the thought of death for him as bravely as Hubert could for himself; but as he knelt presently beside his nephew's bed, saying the few words of prayer for him in which he was able to join, the petition that the sins they had been speaking of that day might be put out of remembrance, was followed by one that their joint offering might be blest to the use for which they destined it, and might be accepted as a thank-offering for the mercy which had reunited them. And Hubert knew that his request was agreed to.

"I am afraid I have neglected those poor children," Oswald said, as he was arranging things ready for the night, "and two or three other matters as well, that your dear mother asked me to see after for her; but the truth is, I have not been myself these two years. I am made with more impatience in my composition than Jacob was, and this long waiting has made me selfish and irritable."

"Did Colonel Dennis say you were to wait two years? how cruel of him!"

"Yes: and I daresay he was right: she was very young. But it drove me mad. I don't think I should have been inclined to have been so hard on you, Hu., if I had not been in such a state of mind. If it were likely to be any satisfaction to you to know it, I can tell you I have been pretty well punished during these eighteen months. I would have given a pound down, any day, for one of your long yarns, which I was very sure would not have had the

one name I most wanted stuck into a postscript, or sometimes in May's left out altogether."

"Trust me, no!" Hubert said, smiling. "I knew what you liked a shade too well for that: shan't we write hard when you go away next!"

The use of the future tense brought back a sudden gravity; which Oswald sharing, and then wishing to interrupt, broke by saying, "You were not so quick at guessing about this as you were about your father's marriage."

"I never guessed about his at all," Hubert answered; "though I saw afterwards in one of your letters that you had thought I had. I hadn't the least idea of it till three days before he was married."

"I fully understood you did: it was the thought that you knew what was coming that entirely turned me off from dreaming even that you could be staying at home with your father from a sense of duty towards him."

Hubert had many questions on his tongue, but weakness kept him silent; only as Oswald bent next minute to wish him good night, he summoned energy enough to ask what he had often longed to satisfy himself about. "Tell me, please uncle, before you go,—I want so to hear you say: Do you still think as you did, that I ought to have decided the opposite way? Do you think I could have?"

Oswald paused before he answered, looking at the sunken face, the feverishly bright eyes, asking the question more eagerly than the low voice had power to show, then he said: "The hope you sacrificed, Hu., was one I held for you nearly as strongly I think as you held it for yourself; but we hold the other hope too, which alone makes a man brave in facing what you have had to look at to-day: and the gaining of no hope can be right,—not even the dearest,—which is gained at the expense of a shadow thrown upon the brightness of that greatest one: 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' I do think now, from what Mr. Maynard tells me, and from what I now

know, that your heart would have justly condemned you if you had decided as I wished you should."

"Then I am glad he wrote: it was very kind of him, and when he was so weak, too. I am comfortable now about the whole matter." He shut his eyes, and Oswald kissed his forehead, saying, "Then I am glad we have had our talk: I was afraid it had done you only harm. Now, good night again. Here comes Cox to stay the night with you, and I am going in for a long sleep. I wish I could think you would share it."

The good-night wish proved a very vain one, as Oswald knew it would when he made it, and the bailiff's report next morning was given as sadly as ever. "It grieves me to the heart," the little man said, "to hear him, dear lad, when he forgets he is not alone, praying to be made willing to die, and just now too, when life has every happiness before him."

Oswald groaned. "It shan't go on like this: my brother comes home for good to-day, and we are to have another opinion this afternoon, and I shall fight again to get them to agree to my trying the only thing I have any faith in for him. Dr. Scott is afraid, and my poor brother thinks it madness, and cannot bear to let me take him from him; but I do believe it might save him yet."

Though, for that day he was withstood again, two weeks later, when every fresh remedy had only proved a fresh failure, and the weakness had increased alarmingly, he gained his point, and as a last hope he was reluctantly allowed to make his attempt. He felt the responsibility greater than for any one else he would have undertaken, and more than once in view of his brother's face, felt tempted to abandon his purpose. But his arrangements were all made without delay, and one mild November morning, he carried his nephew enveloped in furs to the carriage: Dr. Scott took his seat beside him; and following himself, on horseback, they went slowly from the door; those left behind looking after them with mourning which

could hardly have been greater had the carriage been a hearse.

A friend's yacht lay in waiting at the nearest sea-port, which by short stages was gained a day or two later, and there the doctor left them, having seen his patient established on board, and loaded Oswald with last charges. He returned to report, that, contrary to his expectations, the faintings and exhaustion of the first two days had not continued, and that he had left him in no worse a state than he had been before the moving.

"I wonder if I shall ever see them all again?" Hubert questioned, lying in the luxuriously fitted up cabin on the softest of swinging beds, as the anchor was weighed.

"See them? yes, my boy; and stand by me yet, my best man, before next spring is over. I begin to feel able to hope again now. I hardly dared expect, when we left home, that we should have reached the coast before having to turn back with you. I only wish I could get rid of the remembrance of your poor father's face: the very smell of the sea puts hope into me."

Hubert saw it had, looking up at him as he stood for a minute by him, buttoned up in his rough jacket; and tremblingly, he admitted hope into his own heart again, as the wind filled the sails and they stood out to sea, bound for the Mediterranean.



CHAPTER XXVII.

IN HARBOUR.

"Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please."
Spenser.

"I HAVE just seen the carriage pass the gap, sir. Will you come, Miss Raymond says. She is gone out in front to be ready to meet them." The speaker was Mr. Maynard's old man-servant Leigh, and it was in his old master's library that he had come to seek his temporary new one.

"So soon?" Hubert cried, springing up. "I hardly expected them for an hour yet." He turned to the companion with whom he had been talking. "I daresay you would rather wait in here."

"Yes," was the answer; "and bring her in to me. I can't speak to him till I have seen her."

Hubert went out and stood in the bright spring sunshine, in the gravelled court yard before the house, and the next minute his uncle and he were meeting, as though they had been parted a year instead of a fortnight, and May had her arms round Geraldine's neck. When she was released, and Hubert had eagerly claimed her greeting, he drew her arm into his, saying, "Now, come with me, and let me show you what a wedding present I have got for you. I

told you that you should like mine better than anybody's: come and see if you don't."

"Wait for me," Oswald called, busy taking books and wraps from the carriage; but his nephew looked back, saying:

"No, don't you come yet: this present is for her alone. I have another for you both. You tell him, May," and the two went on together.

"What is it?" Oswald asked: "He looks as excited as if he had a live lion to show her. How has he been keeping? he is very white."

"He will soon lose that up here," May answered. "He says he slept better last night than he has done since coming on shore. He likes the sound of the sea here, it seems like an old friend to him; and the quiet wandering about the cliffs and grounds in peace is just what suits him. They worry him with taking too much care of him at home. Papa never has his eyes off him: and being run after every five minutes with, You ought not to be doing this, and, Don't do that, ends by making him overdo himself just out of bravado. He ran away from it at last some days ago, down to see Maxwell; and he, foolish fellow, dragged him off with him to Woolwich and showed him all over the Arsenal, and quite knocked him up. However, it was there he found his present for Geraldine, and has hardly been able to wait to tell her."

"What is it? Woolwich,—Dermot is it? I always thought he had enlisted. It is—— ha! He ought to have prepared her first: it will startle her too much."

And he was starting to follow them, when his niece caught his arm. "No: now don't be fussy, uncle; let him have his pleasure out. You know she is not one to be startled and go into hysterics; she looks much too happy to be hurt by being made a little more so."

Oswald laughing stopped. "I think you are right: and here comes Hu. back again."

"She wants you uncle," he said. "It is worth going a mile to see his face, poor fellow: but don't stay long, for I want to show you your rooms, and I have told them to bring up tea; you must be both ready for it."

His uncle held his shoulder, saying, "It is fine fun, Hu., to see you doing master in your own house. How many servants do you keep: butler and valet, and chef de cuisine?"

"All that is left for you and Geraldine to settle when you set up in state," Hubert answered, laughing. "Just now, Leigh and his wife and a girl, are all our establishment. Now do go to them. I suppose you have not forgotten where the library is?"

They presently surrounded the table, where Oswald insisted on being guest for that evening; and Geraldine assured May she would on no account touch her teapot. The windows stood open, and the soft spring air blew in upon them from the sea, and Hubert looking out, down over the garden to the sparkling water, seemed to catch a reflection from it in his eyes: his knife rested in his fingers, and his lips curled into a smile. Geraldine was looking at him. "This is better than our last tea together, Hu.," she said softly; and he turned his glad eyes to hers, while the quick recollection dimmed them suddenly with tears of thankful feeling.

He winked them away, answering, with a laugh: "And cold turkey is more eatable than the beef-tea which preceded it. Let me see your ring again, Gerry, have you kept it safe?"

Oswald looked across saying, "I tell you what, Master Hu., I'll turn you out of your own house if you call my wife Gerry, like an Irish car driver."

"No: I'll treat my aunt with more respect," said Hubert. "I believe it is the first time I have done so, since she took her auntship upon her."

Very happy were they all, as merry talk and laughter went

on round the table ; for it was not only to Hubert that this first gathering in the new home brought a fuller realization that troubled clouded days were passed, and that peaceful anchorage was reached, where in quiet harbour they might rest and refresh themselves before starting again to fresh voyaging. It was only the one most strange among them who could not show his happiness as they did. As Dermot sat nearly silent at his sister's side, his happiness, though greater than he had known for months, was heavily shadowed by the past, which the sound of the voices familiar then recalled painfully ; and Hubert, noticing his quiet manner among their gaiety, and his absent answers, proposed at last, " If everyone has done, let us go for a stroll before the sun sets. Dermot, you take Geraldine somewhere and finish your talk ; and uncle, you come with me for a turn, do. Come up the cliff path."

" And poor May ? " said Oswald

" Will go and find a dog for a companion," she answered, merrily. " Now, please, let no one say they want me, for the fib would be wasted on me. But, Hu., come first and show them your wedding present proper,—one with a sweeter voice than yours, Dermot ; though not, perhaps, to Geraldine."

She led the way to the drawing-room, where her brother stepped up at once to a grand piano, and opened it, looking up with a smile at Oswald, as he shook his head at him, saying, " You may say Thank you with a clear conscience, uncle : my father said I might do it without asking your leave first. You know I am rich without needing my riches. It is true it is what you like best : isn't it Geraldine ? "

She was already seated before it ; and when a short brilliant Mazurka had shown off its beauty, and her warm thanks had been spoken once and again, " Now, you try it, Oswald," she said.

" Nothing but a psalm tune can I play," he answered. " Hu., you have taken good care not to be forgotten when you are away, and we are left alone together. And I can

tell you it will be no small comfort to me to think of her with such a companion when I am away at sea."

"How can you speak of that this first evening?" Dermot said, hastily, glancing at his sister.

"And why not?" her husband asked, looking round at her. "She married a sailor with open eyes: did you not? And can say 'When you are at sea' as bravely as any sailor's wife, I know."

"When you are at sea," she repeated, smiling at him. "But still I think we may as well talk of something else just now. Come, play your tune."

"Stop, uncle," May interrupted him, as he began feeling over his chords. "If we are to have one of your psalm tunes, let us have it accompanied. Hu., here is the book. You choose what hymn you would like: the first to be sung to the new piano."

He turned to one at once; and the five voices were soon joining in the words,—

"How are Thy servants blest, O Lord!

How sure is their defence!

Eternal wisdom is their guide,

Their help, omnipotence.

"In foreign realms, and lands remote,

Supported by Thy care,

Through burning climes they pass unhurt,

And breathe in tainted air.

"From all their griefs and dangers, Lord,

Thy mercy sets them free;

While in the confidence of prayer

Their souls take hold on Thee.

"When by the dreadful tempest borne

High on the broken wave,

They know Thou art not slow to hear,

Nor impotent to save.

"The storm is laid, the winds retire,

Obedient to Thy will;

The sea that roared at Thy command,

At Thy command is still.

"In midst of dangers, fears, and deaths,
Thy goodness I'll adore,
And praise Thee for Thy mercies past,
And humbly hope for more.

"My life, while Thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be ;
And death, when death shall be my lot,
Shall join my soul to Thee."

There was a little silence when they had ended ; and then Oswald, standing up, turned to his nephew, grasping his hand again, with a hearty, "Thank you greatly, Hu. I won't quarrel with my brother trustee for giving leave without consulting me ;" while Geraldine finished her repeated thanks with a whispered, "And for your hymn too. We will often have it up here."

"You like it?" he said, as the others moved. "It is one I have had in my head for months past. My mother made me learn it when I was a little fellow, crying at uncle's first going away. But here is Dermot, looking daggers at me for keeping you."

"Yes," he said, drawing his sister to him : "let me have her now. Had I but had anyone to make *me* learn that name, 'Servant of God,' as the true secret of a man's blessedness, I might have escaped rebellion and its sorrows, and should not have to look at her now as half a stranger."

"No more a stranger to me, dear Dermot, than you were three years ago," she said ; while Oswald put his hand on his shoulder, saying, "If once rebellious, you have just said now,

" 'My life, while Thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be :'

"keep to that. Past failure in obedience to such a Master repented of will lead to redoubled determination to right for the future. Now come along, Hu. ; and don't take her far, Dermot, for she must be tired : we have been travelling long."

"And I," said May, "must go and find my dog."

The sun was slanting long beams from above the horizon, over gorse and heather and lichen-covered rocks, as Hubert and his uncle turned into the path upon the cliff, where he had gone so often with Mr. Maynard's hand upon his arm. He was not sorry now to accept Oswald's, as he offered it, saying, "This is a pull up for you: take it slowly. I see you want my looking after again. Here, wrap this round you: the sun is nearly gone. I don't want to fidget you," he added, as Hubert obediently drew the offered plaid about him; "but don't let us begin to fall into careless ways too soon. I have felt these two weeks as if I had lost something, without you to think for."

"Don't call this fidgeting, uncle," Hubert said. "Who can have a better right than you to fidget after me? If I did not mind you, you would be thinking I was spelling for a second trip to Algiers. Come home with me for a week, and then you will know what fidgeting in perfection is."

"I believe you. But you must submit to it there till the strained side is atoned for. Dr. Scott won't forget that soon, as a good joke; but it is one your father hardly relishes. But I say, Hu., you must give up saying *home* to the wrong house,—at least to me and Geraldine. This is your home, as it is your house. It is the thought of making it home to you that makes us satisfied in using it. I was glad to see in your room that you had brought up your household gods. It looks strange to see them established among my boyish treasures."

"Yes. Fortunately, they were wanting to make some alterations of rooms, and my father was pleased at my offering to give up mine, now that they have yours; so as everything was pulled down, I carried them off, contented enough to see the last of the old nook, and all I had stared at for so many miserable hours from bed."

"And you paid a visit to the doctor before you left?" his uncle said. "What was his opinion of you? I had no

time to talk to him about you on our wedding morning, as I had meant to do."

"When I was always catching his eye fixed upon me as if I were a walking miracle. Oh yes, I went to see him: my father told me I must. I have made him promise to come up here and stay a fortnight with us in the summer: isn't that good?"

"Yes, first-rate. But what does he think of you? that is what I want to know."

"Oh, he says I am in a fair way to be quite right again now, only I am to stay up here and be idle all the summer. Not a very bad prescription, is it? He says then there is no reason why I should not be fit to begin life again like other people, by next winter. Of course this kernel was enveloped in a very thick husk of 'if's'; but I believe you are going to have all that on foolscap."

"I'll study it for you, then. But that is a very good hearing," Oswald said,—better much than I had dared to hope. I had had fears of threats of Mentone or Torquay for next winter. You will have to stand my worrying you."

"What should I be made of if I didn't?" Hubert said, looking up at him with grateful eyes. "Didn't the Doctor use fully ten minutes in impressing the fact upon me, which I think I need no telling to know, that I owe my life to you?"

They presently reached the stone seat, far overgrown by the neglected gorse bushes behind it; and while Oswald seated himself on one end of it, Hubert threw himself back among the heather, crying. "Oh, isn't it jolly! You can't tell how infinitely obliged I am to you for consenting to use the place, for now I can enjoy it too: it would have to have been let else, I suppose; and I feel much more myself here now than at home,—than at the Park,—I must say!"

"If you feel about it like that, you may be sure I am only too glad to do it," his uncle said. "I have a great affection for the place from old association. It was only the fear of not doing fairly by you that made me hesitate so long. But

most certainly health and present pleasure are more what I want to see you possessing than laid up wealth ; and I am sure you will gain both up here with us, better than anywhere else, while you need care, and till you are fit to begin work again. You will always be here too for summer holiday time. I shall trust to you for taking care of my Geraldine then. Did I tell you of your father's kind offer of letting May be with her when I sail, and receiving her at the Park for the winter months, when I should not like her to be up here without me? Ah, Hu., there are bad things as well as good in being a sailor. But now tell me, how have you succeeded about your Woolwich scheme? Does he consent?"

"He consents, yes: though not over willingly, I am afraid. He had wished me, I think, to choose something which would have kept me in England; but there was no reason for my giving in. I did not say so to him; but somehow I feel as if I had been unfitted for settling down quietly. One can't dream of a thing for a dozen years, and then be just the same at the end, as if one hadn't. I want an active life; and one lived under orders."

His uncle looked at him, laughing. "That last is a want I have not heard often expressed. Will being under orders from the Horse Guards make you happier than to be your own master?"

"I have always expected to have to obey orders; and to be my own master is not my idea of happiness," Hubert answered quietly, in his usual decided tone. "I shall be happier so. I could not live here doing nothing; and whatever Mr. Maynard thought of my brains, I would rather take them into the Artillery than anywhere else now."

"And your father has consented. Well, I am glad of it. I could not have reconciled myself to seeing you either a barrister or a clergyman," his uncle said; then added with a smile, "But of course the wish of a man of property is bound to be considered."

"I don't know that that has much to do with it; but

when I told him you were for it, and quite approved, he said he had nothing more to say."

"I wish that had always been his opinion," Oswald said.

"Ah, yes," Hubert said: but you see *now* he fully agrees with Dr. Scott as to the right you have to me: a thing he would never agree to my thinking in the old days. I am to begin to prepare with some tutor in Surrey next winter. Colonel Dennis has been taking no end of trouble about finding one for me, to his mind; so in a few years you will be writing to me in India or Canada, perhaps." He caught his uncle's eye as he watched his changing expression while he spoke, and said, "You are asking the old question again, I see, and I can only answer it again in the same way: my mind will never change. I like the idea of this, and much more since I have been down to Woolwich; but I would come with you to-morrow if I might. Still I can say now what I could not have said when I answered you last,—that I really am contented to be divided from you in a different service for life, as it was to be. That sort of thing doesn't seem quite the same to me now: not so big,—not as if I couldn't see over it to anything else; and we know that both services will be done with by-and-by, and then only the one will remain in which we are both joined."

"You are right," Oswald said: "I will be contented too."

They sat listening to the booming of the sea against the cliffs for some little time then, each busy with reminiscences of other times when the same sound was in their ears, and then Oswald asked, "What is Dermot going to do?"

"He is off to-morrow to his father. He wanted at first to wait and see what sort of answer he would get to his letter, but I have been persuading him to go to him at once. Don't you think he ought?"

"Most undoubtedly: he owes it to his father to go and ask his forgiveness, whatever reception he might meet with; and I am sure now, from the way he was speaking of him to me the other day, he will receive nothing but a kind one.

He was so greatly desirous to hear of him for his poor mother's sake. It was a sad waking from that long sleep of mind to find only one child left her, and she on the point of leaving her. I should think Dermot would be likely to stay abroad with them for a time. How did you meet with him?"

"It was when I was down at Woolwich with Max. I was sitting resting on a wall while he was talking to a friend, and I suppose I looked about as bad as I felt, for a soldier came up to me, and asked me if I wouldn't come round the corner into the shade, as he thought I looked ill. I knew him in a minute. He said a likeness to my old self had made him first look at me, and directly I spoke he was sure who it was. I told Max. I must go and talk with him; and his friend let me take him to his room which was not far off; and there we sat, and I told him everything. Poor fellow, when he asked after Harry!"

"He had not seen it in the papers then: poor boy. And how about his discharge?"

"Oh, I wrote to my father at once about that, and it was soon settled; he is so extremely kind about anything I ask him."

"Kind!" Oswald repeated, laughing. "He would nearly give you half his possessions I think, if you asked for it. He little thought last autumn he would ever have the chance of doing you the smallest kindness again. A pleasant thing for Colonel Dennis to hear truly, that his son has been spending three years in the ranks. How has Dermot liked it?"

"Endured it is more the word, I think. He was intensely thankful to make his escape."

"I suppose he told you all his story. Solve the mystery for me. How was it he got away from home unseen?"

"It is a thing I don't think he much likes talking about," Hubert answered. "But I did ask him. It was no wonder no one should have thought of his dodge. All the time the hunt was going on after him he was quietly staying in the

Grange, safely hidden in one of the rooms kept for Mrs. Dennis. He says he stayed there several days, getting food and water at night, and left the house one dark evening, and enlisted in London next day."

"That was it: was it? I was sure we should hear one day some explanation which no one had ever thought of."

The subject of Dermot was one not soon exhausted; and the last glow was fading from the sky, when Hubert, who had been lying back, resting silent for some time, sat up, saying, suddenly, "Uncle, is it not strange to think that it is just through the loss of the one thing I most hoped for, that I have got more of the very thing I wanted so much. Here I shall have had you all to myself for half a year; and I shall have lived with you for nearly a whole one, by the time you go to sea again."

"Yes, Hu.: and we have grown to know and love one another in a way which no other life but such as we have been living would ever have taught us; not even sailing together in the Euphrosyne. It is a lesson which our faith has to learn, and which I am sure the Christian's experience teaches him,—that *all* the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep His covenant, and His testimonies. They may look black enough ahead; but mercies, both promised and unpromised, come to us certainly in the way of obedience, which are lost in straying from it."

Hubert looked up, saying, with the grave thoughtfulness, which trouble, and his long lying near to death, had made the very constant companion to his boyish light-heartedness, "I think no mercy among them all is greater, though it is not exactly to be found promised in the Bible, than the getting rid, as one does at last, of that wretched sort of mad impatience which makes every trouble double; the feeling as if one were meeting something one had no right to meet, I mean, instead of what one was bound to expect."

"Rightly said, Hu.," his uncle answered. "Bound to expect, from the first minute of obeying the command,

‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me.’ All trouble comes then as the touch of His hands guiding our yoked necks heavenwards. It is in paths well filled with mercies that He leads us.”

“Yes: that it is. I am sure I have good cause to say that. But it is only those mercies that one knows are promised to obedience that one has a right to count as given for it, I think, uncle.”

“I don’t know that. It is not promised ones alone, it is unpromised ones too, that one can receive only in His paths. Mercies, which would have been missed, if another than God’s way for us had been taken, may rightly be looked at as the result of the obedient walking in that way. You were congratulating yourself on one just now; and I should say that you had found some others too, greater than a year of my companionship.” Hubert looked round, questioning; and his uncle added, “You have not thought of them?”

“No: I know of none.”

“Perhaps in your case I might call them promised ones, if one may take a certain promise of our Lord’s, not figuratively, but literally. I was thinking so just now; looking at this beautiful place of yours, and thinking of the man who left it to you, and who had taken you to his heart like a son, the words of Christ came to my mind, where He says that whosoever should deny himself, and give up for His sake what he holds dear, shall receive manifold more in the present life,—houses and lands, fathers and brothers, besides in the world to come eternal life.”

Hubert’s colour rose, as he said, quickly, “Uncle, hush: you must not say such things to me! I shall have to change St. Paul’s command into a different form for you, and say, ‘Let not any man think of *another* more highly than he ought to think.’ Do you remember the verse which you put as the last in our book of rules?”

“No, indeed, my boy. I don’t think I have studied mine as diligently as you seem to have done yours. You

will have to let me think of you as I choose. It is easier sometimes to obey that command for oneself than for another who has done what, perhaps, one feels would have been an act beyond one's own power of obedience. We know to Whose grace the power is owing and the praise is due. But now we must be going down again: this air is growing too chill for you, and Geraldine will be thinking we are lost. What verse were you meaning?"

"You wrote," Hubert said, as they stood for a minute looking out to sea,—“you wrote, as the command, after a book filled with commands, ‘When ye shall have done *all* those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.’”



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